BARCLAY'S DAUGHTER

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"'OF COURSE IT'S TIRESOME, ANNE.'"—PAGE 29.

BARCLAY'S DAUGHTER.

BY

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AUTHOR OF "AT BROWN'S," "THE MINISTER'S WIFE," "WAS HE WISE?" ETC.

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BARCLAY'S DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER I.

SEEDS.

"The little foxes that spoil the vines."
—*Song of Solomon.*

"I TELL you that I can't let you have it, Barclay! I'm sorry, but this isn't my saloon and I have to obey orders."

The man addressed made a half angry, half imbecile gesture of protestation. His weak, bloodshot eyes contracted as he stared into the bartender's face.

"Millard's a crank!" he said thickly. "If he isn't here to oblige the public, why does he keep a saloon? Just one glass, Jim! I won't peach on you, an' the old man'll never know!"

The bartender shook his head, shutting his lips firmly. He knew from experience that an order demanded prompt obedience in that saloon.

"No," he said quietly but impressively, "not

one drop, Barclay! You had all that's good for you, you know, before you came here, and I'll not be the one to give you more against Mr. Millard's orders."

The man clenched his trembling right hand upon the bar, and his eyes flashed wickedly as he steadied himself and attempted to stand erect, disclaiming the previous use of liquor.

"I ain't had a drop to-night—not one drop!" he said with pathetic emphasis, swaying as he was from the effects of more than even one glass. "But if I'd had a hundred it ain't none of your business, Jim Dean, nor Millard's neither, and if you won't give me what I want, I guess there's more than one saloon in this town where they'll be glad to give me liquor for money! I ain't askin' credit! I've got the money right here. See!"

He drew his left hand from a pocket of his neatly patched coat, and eagerly held it forward, open, to show the bit of silver on the wrinkled palm.

"I ain't lyin' to you, Jim Dean! I pay for my drinks always. I never run in debt!"

Jim Dean frowned, though a slight flush dawned in his cheeks and he turned nervously aside to evade the old man's convincing proof.

For Jim Dean knew too well whose slim hands worked almost unceasingly, and whose pale, sweet face bent above the sewing that should keep her name and this old man's name free from the charge of debt. He knew, and he shook his head.

"I tell you, Mr. Barclay, I can't let you have it! I've been here long enough to know the penalty of disobeying orders, and not one drop will you have here to-night. Why don't you go home now and wait till to-morrow for another drink?"

The blush deepened upon his cheeks as he spoke, for it was unusual for a bartender to advise temperance to a would-be customer, but the pale, sweet face came between him and that bit of silver in the old man's trembling hand, and the words would not be silenced. They two were alone; otherwise he would not have had the courage to utter this thought, and even so he glanced guiltily around to be certain of this.

The old man's face darkened, but a drunken smile was on his lips. He replaced the silver in his pocket, keeping his fingers still upon it lest it be taken from him, and turned unsteadily from the bar.

"You're a nice sort of feller—you are," he said with heavy sarcasm, "Jim Dean! A-preachin' temperance and sellin' liquor at the same time! If it's all on account of my girl, you needn't bother! As I jest said, I don't keep no account with any one, and it's none of her business nor yours either if I want an extra drink! What's she good for if not to care for her father when he's old and can't take care of himself! And if you won't sell me the liquor I'll go som'er's else where I know they will!"

Jim Dean made no reply, but hastily began setting the glasses straight on the bar as a customer entered and the old man passed out. He was somewhat annoyed and nervous, for he knew that John Barclay was perfectly well aware that his friendly words were uttered only because of the gentle girl whose face was so sadly pale bent above her sewing, and not because he held any good wish for the man whose honor was made secondary to his appetite.

He was a bartender, and the smell and taste and effect of liquor were every-day affairs to him, although, as in this instance, no one was allowed to sell in that saloon any liquor to any one who had been drinking before entering there. This was the one peculiar but undeviating command

of Millard, the proprietor, and it was this that Jim Dean dared not disobey.

"For the temperate use of liquor is good," Harry Millard said, arguing with himself when he decided upon this mode of making a swift fortune, "and if I allow no one to become intoxicated on my premises, is it not better for me, having this rule, to sell liquor than for another man who would sell the last drop he could get down a man's throat and make him beastly drunk? If I don't sell it some one else will, and my mode is a good one as well as my motive. No one shall be lowered by intoxication in my saloon, but I may as well make money in that way as for another man to do it with a lighter sense of honor!"

As old Barclay turned from the saloon and the newcomer entered, an amused smile was upon his lips. He was thinking of this remarkable mode of silencing conscience and wondering of what avail it was to refuse a man that which he could easily obtain at the very next saloon!

"How are you, Jim?" he asked pleasantly, as he crossed to the bar, resting one hand lightly and steadily upon it. "I'll take whiskey this time, as I have been on a long drive and it is rather chilly to-night!"

Then as he set the emptied glass upon the counter and carefully wiped his mustache, he added good-humoredly,—

"Poor Barclay's had a little too much again, Jim. How did you come to overstep the bounds this time with him?"

"I didn't," Jim replied quickly. "Whatever he had, he got before he came in here, Mr. Cartwright. I have been here too long to overstep the bounds in that way!"

The other lifted his brows and shrugged his shoulders knowingly.

"Oh, I see! It was because you wouldn't let him have it that he looked so savage. I imagined it the other way when I came in, for I thought you looked rather rattled. But you needn't have minded me. I can wink, you know! Poor fellow, that Barclay. No will at all. Now, if he could take a glass and stop there as I do, he would never have come down to such poverty. I rather think that girl of his gives him what little he does spend, anyway."

"I know she does!" said Jim hastily. Then he bit his lip, turning away to ring the coin, just given in exchange for the whiskey, into the cash drawer as he added: "Any one with half an eye would know that, for he never works and has no

bank account. Such fellows as he never do, you know."

The other nodded carelessly, pausing to light a cigar.

"More fools they, Dean! I never go beyond what's good for me, and no one else need to if they'd only cultivate a steady will. How's Millard? And his daughter? There's a pretty girl for you! They are well? Always are. I never saw such a man as he, and Miss Minnie isn't one of the wishy-washy people who dare not say one's soul is one's own nor allow a fellow to turn a hair's breadth from the straight way! Give Barclay my advice when next he comes in, Jim. Good-night."

And nodding complacently Mr. Cartwright also passed out, a smile upon his lips.

"It's all in habit," he said to himself. "Look at Millard; look at Dean—always in it; look at me! Barclay needn't have been a poor old toper if he had done as we do. It's all folly!"

"But sometimes it is easier to give advice than to give the necessary strength of will to follow it," murmured Jim Dean as he watched Cartwright down the street. "A mighty sight easier, let me tell you, Tom, and I'd rather be

excused. If Barclay will drink to excess it's his own lookout, I suppose; but it's a pity, too, on account of his daughter. He deserves all the hard knocks he gets, but she——"

More customers; courteous attention necessary; no time to moralize, and then it was rather incongruous for a man to preach temperance and practice exactly the opposite. Even Jim Dean thought this and in consequence set aside further thought upon the subject of either Barclay's absurd intemperance or his daughter's tender patience.

For what had intemperance or hardly used women to do with that model saloon? And thinking this, Jim Dean laughed, shrugging his shoulders nonchalantly, not being able to see Anne Barclay as she sat at her sewing near the western window of her room, the last rays of sunset touching her face into a radiance beyond mere physical beauty. Her eyes were heavy with weariness, but the brave soul within struck light through them as she sang softly, trying to keep up her bravery. A low, sweet, rather thin voice murmuring a comforting hymn as the slender hands busily worked with the needle flashing in the western light as she ran it in and out through the snowy muslin garment.

"Other refuge have I none,
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee;
Leave, oh, leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me."

Many times the pale face was lifted and the dark eyes turned toward the window in anxious waiting, while an indescribable sadness touched and deepened about the pallid lips. The glory of the sunset was softly fading, and the radiance upon her face also faded, though still leaving that inner light upon the windows of her soul.

"All my trust on Thee is stayed,
All my help from Thee I bring;
Cover my defenceless head
With the shadow of Thy wing."

The soft light without, slowly fading, left delicate shadows around the room, though lingering upon the tall clock against the opposite wall to make a white glory of its stolid face. The small round pine table was neatly set in the center of the room, and although the china was none too delicate or artistic, it was clear and polished by the free use of hot water and brisk towels until it reflected the lights and shadows near it. A tiny pat of butter pitifully small; a loaf of bread; upon the small stove at the other end of the room was a pot of steaming coffee strong and fragrant to the girl's tired senses, with a square

of steak in a pan drawn back, daintily brown, to keep hot.

"Father will be hungry when he comes!" said Anne Barclay, pausing in her song and her work to look earnestly up the street, the eyes unfaltering but pathetically sad. "I wish that he would come. He is late and tea will be spoiled for him. I should not have prepared it so early."

No hint that he should not have kept her waiting; no blame for him; Anne Barclay never uttered one harsh word to her father, no matter how hard he might be with her.

There was much passing upon the street, and now and then some one would turn and glance up at the window where Anne sat, to give her a smile or bow or both, invariably answered by a smile that illumined her pale face and shone from her eyes starrily. Some of these passers-by were young like herself; some belonged to her Sunday-school class; some were busy workers; but there were those among them who were older, who had heard in that pretty town of this girl's brave struggle for her drunken father and herself, and proved their sympathy by kindly words, and offered work, as she would accept nothing that could be termed charity!

The brave old hymn had died away and there was no sound in the room save the sound of footsteps on the pavement, the dull creak of the rocker as Anne swayed slowly to and fro, bending forward to use the last ray of daylight,—and the deep, constant ticking of the great clock against the wall.

"Quarter to eight!" said Anne, by and by, laying aside her sewing and rising to light the lamp upon the stand beside her. Then she paused ere drawing the shades to search the street, as far as she could see, for any sign of her father. There were many on the street, but search each face as she would, not one was he, and with a soft sigh, stifled ere formed, she drew down the shade, leaving a faint train of light beneath as a beacon for his coming, and reseated herself at her sewing.

"He will surely come presently," she said, running her delicate, pink-tinted nail lightly over the seam which she had been sewing, to smooth it down.

Very neat, perfectly clean the small square room where she was sitting, lighted only by that one lamp on the sewing-stand. A bare floor, but white with much scrubbing; a few unframed engravings upon the white walls, cut from maga-

zines or bought for a few cents. Exceedingly empty of comfort, yet made wholesome and attractive by the care of womanly hands and the presence of the womanly girl with her pale face bent over her sewing. Three small rooms on the second story of a small frame house on a side street, but a home's happiness striven for by those two slender hands with the shining needle and the long seams of the undergarments which she was making.

Eight o'clock; half after eight! The clock's heavy hammer had scarcely swung from the gong, chiming the half hour, when a clumsy, stumbling foot sounded upon the stairs, and Anne rose hastily, laying aside her sewing to open the door and light him into the room. For, a wave of color across her cheeks, she knew that this was her father's step, and that he brought with him the terrible effects of the cup whose dregs are serpents and whose touch is a soul's possible death! She was trembling and for an instant a gleam of tears touched her eyes; then, standing in the open doorway, she smiled and her face was lighted like the face of an angel with tender sorrow and pity as she reached out her hand to steady his faltering steps.

"Come in, father," she said softly; "see! I

have a bright light for you after the darkness of the street."

He muttered a curse upon her as he steadied himself along the wall, rather than touch her outstretched hand as he brushed past her into the clean white room.

Her trembling ceased; the color was gone from her face. She watched him anxiously lest he fall, and as he sunk into a chair tossing his hat upon the floor, entering after him, she gently closed the door and crossed to the table to prepare him a cup of coffee, strong and fragrant. She knew that he would eat nothing in his present condition, but the coffee would do him good.

As she handed him the cup he sullenly pushed it from him, almost knocking it from her hand.

"I've had something better than coffee," he said, unsteadily, leering at her, though his eyes fell before her sweet, grieved face. "Coffee's best for women. Men need stronger stuff."

She made no reply. She knew from experience that silence was best. She set the cup, with the contents untouched, back upon the table. He would take the coffee soon if she did not press it upon him. Then she made a pretence of eating, not touching the meat, for she knew

that she must eat in order to work, and everything depended upon her strength.

He watched her for a few moments in sullen silence; then he, too, arose and crossed to the table, seating himself with much unnecessary noise.

"That Jim Dean of Millard's is a mighty sight too stuck up and ordering!" he burst out presently, stirring his coffee with his unsteady hand as though it were Jim Dean whom he would punish. "An arrogant fellow and only a bartender at that! Don't you never speak to him again, Anne Barclay, or you ain't got your father's pride. To tell me to my face that I'd had all that was good for me, and he wouldn't give me just one glass! It's a shame that such a fellow is allowed to live."

"Mr. Dean has been kind to me, father," said Anne quietly, a flicker of flush in her pale cheeks, her eyes steady and sweet; "why should I not speak to him?"

He brought one hand down heavily upon the table, rattling the dishes startlingly. His bloodshot eyes for the moment met hers wrathfully.

"And why? You can sit there and ask such a question after what I have said, Anne Barclay? I've always said that there was never one drop

of my blood in your veins and now this proves it! To let a man like that Jim Dean say such an insulting thing to me and yet ask why you should not speak to him. It's all of a piece with your impertinence. More than likely you asked him to refuse me. And I offered him good solid silver money for it, too. But because a man is old these young fellows think they can say anything to them without reproof. I'd like to've heard myself say such a thing when I was young!"

"You would not have said it," Anne said gently, a sigh in her heart, knowing, alas, that his words were only too literally true,—"you could not have said it, father. But I am sure that Mr Dean meant no harm. He has been very kind."

He turned upon her fiercely.

"Always preaching up his kindness!" he exclaimed thickly, his voice beyond his control. "I'll hear no more of that Jim Dean, Anne Barclay, and if you mention him again in my presence you're no daughter of mine. Now, mind!"

"I am sorry you are angry, father," she said very softly, taking up her sewing as she sat with him at the table, neither to neglect him or her work. "I shall try not to grieve you again."

"I should advise you to!" he grumbled,

pushing away his cup and leaning his elbow heavily upon the table, his head in his hand, utterly regardless of how often he had grieved her.

And so silence fell over the neat white room and between the maudlin man and the woman who, his daughter, yet possessed not one drop of his blood in her pitiful heart, whose slim, tireless hands guided the needle along the garment she was sewing.

CHAPTER II.

PRETTY MISS MILLARD.

"It is as impossible for a man to be cheated by any one but himself as for a thing to be and not to be at the same time."

—*Emerson.*

'I HAVE so much plain sewing to be done that I shall send for Anne Barclay to-morrow," said Mrs. Millard as she was looking over the linen brought her from the laundry. She was sitting with her daughter in her large, sunny, handsome room fronting upon a stretch of shaded street adorned with elegant residences. For Harry Millard was a wealthy man and could well afford an aristocratic neighborhood. "Anne Barclay takes unusual pains with her work for one so young, but it is a charity to help her in this way when ready-made underclothing can be bought so cheaply at the shops."

"Yes," said pretty Miss Millard, turning her languid eyes upon her mother from the pages of her novel, half hidden by the huge cushions of her chair; "but Anne Barclay would scorn charity, mamma. She is as proud as we are, every whit—and as worthy!"

There was fine sarcasm in the pretty voice and deep meaning in the lifted eyes bent upon the elder woman, and Mrs. Millard knew this quite well, although she gave no sign. For Mrs. Millard also knew that her daughter's sensitive nature was constantly wounded by the knowledge that it was through the ruin of souls that money came to them.

"I presume that it will take her at the very least two weeks to do up all the sewing that I have to be done, and we will keep her with us during that time. They are so very poor that it will save them much expense for Anne to stay."

Miss Millard shrugged her shoulders and slightly raised her brows.

"You know that she will not leave her father," she said coldly. "What would he do without her, mamma?"

"He would get along well enough," replied Mrs. Millard easily; "like other men, my dear. Do not waste your pity upon him."

For a moment the blue eyes flashed into the opposite blue eyes in ineffable scorn. Then the girl said steadily:

"I was wasting no pity upon him, mamma; I was thinking of Anne."

And then she turned to her book again, refusing to continue the conversation, her thoughts too busy with this other girl's brave struggle against poverty and wrong, for comprehending one word of the printed page before her. And after a keen side-glance at her saddened, preoccupied face, Mrs. Millard, with a faint sigh, continued her work. And her thoughts also were very busy with the past and its scattered seed, and the harvest that should come. For she knew—she was not so hardened in conscience as not to confess to herself—that the seed sown oftentimes in good faith brought forth fruit too bitter for the harvest!

Her husband was a wealthy man and conscientious. Some of his friends went so far as to say that he was a fool for his conscience, but their good-natured raillery did not affect or move him from his determination to prove whether or no there could be harm done through the moderate use of liquor when this bound was never overstepped, and when a generous hand and purse were ready in time of need to stranger or friend.

Still his conscience would waken at times and warn him that only evil could come from evil and never figs from thistles. Still he argued

this down and kept on his way; were many hurt? The harvest must prove.

Mrs. Millard was perfectly aware of this weak side to her husband's conscience, for they had discussed the matter many times together, and she firmly believed, as she always at such times assured him, that no harm could come directly from them. If no liquor were sold in his saloon to an intoxicating extent no harm arose from his sale of it. If harm came, it must rest with the person who, unable to get it there, would go elsewhere for more than was good. Liquor was good in its way.

And her husband perhaps only too willingly accepted this decision and silenced his conscience more and more effectually every time of argument.

Mrs. Millard was thinking of this, sitting in the sunny room with her daughter, and it was strange and most exasperating that clearly before her eyes the pale, sweet face of Anne Barclay rose to prove her argument false and to show the withering harvest coming to many because of evil seed sown by another. And presently, unable longer to endure this accusing face of memory, she rose, laying aside her work.

"It is time that we dressed for calling," she said.

"Come, lay aside your novel, Minnie. I understand that the Wiltons have unexceptionable people visiting them from the city and I wish you to be at your best. The carriage will be around in an hour. Do not keep me waiting."

Minnie rose obediently, closing her book. For to Minnie Millard obedience was taught as one of the cardinal virtues. Her clear perception might show her the wrong, but it was not her duty to revolutionize the world or the people. She must follow her path of duty and allow others to pass upon their own. She was sad many times, seeing wrong blindly done, but she did not think that it was her sin to let it pass upon the other side with gaping wounds.

"I shall be ready, mamma," she said quietly as she closed the door between them in passing to her room.

"I must not again allow her to talk upon such saddening subjects," Mrs. Millard decided as she thought of the change upon the pretty young face at mention of Barclay's daughter. "It is her duty to be happy and fill her niche in life. I must impress this fact upon her. I have been careless."

And an hour later Mrs. Millard with her pretty daughter, both elegantly dressed and with com-

placent faces, drove from the entrance to their handsome home upon a round of calls, utterly forgetful of the pale sweet face of another girl, also young and pretty, in the small clean room at the other end of the town. And as the dinner hour approached they drove back home, well satisfied with themselves, discussing such friends and acquaintances as they met or had spoken of during the afternoon.

"Go to your room and lie down for a half hour, Minnie," said Mrs. Millard as they paused in the upper hall. "I shall do the same. And I shall send a little wine to you at once. It will brighten you a bit, and you know that papa likes to have us bright when he is at home."

"Yes," said Minnie dutifully, though a shadow touched her face. "As you wish, mamma, of course."

"Of course!" repeated Mrs. Millard emphatically as she entered her room, and crossed directly to a closet where she kept such home remedies as were liable to be needed. "Wine gives a tone to one's looks and voice that nothing else can. No harm for you to have it, little Minnie, as we shall prove to all those who doubt."

And pouring a glassful for herself she drank it ere she poured another for her daughter.

"A judicious use of liquor is wise," she said calmly, noting as she passed her mirror the renewed sparkle in her own bright eyes. "Temperance in all things is well, but not fanaticism."

And carrying the wine with her own hands to her daughter's room, she assured herself that she was comfortably lounging upon the bed, in a loose dressing-gown and dainty wool slippers, before she gave her the wine that should rest and refresh her.

"I really don't need the wine, mamma," Minnie said half wistfully, knowing even as she spoke that her protest would not move her mother. "I am so tired from talking to all those people that I can sleep soundly for the allowed half hour without it!"

"That is absurd," replied Mrs. Millard with cool decision. "I am not giving you this to make you sleep, but to refresh you, to restore your nerves and to brighten you. It is merely medicine, Minnie, and I insist upon your drinking it at once."

"Yes, mamma," said Minnie with a soft little sigh, stifled in a smile up into her mother's handsome, displeased face. "Of course you know best."

Her path of duty was so plain, how could she question it?

"Most assuredly I know best," said Mrs. Millard in a more gentle voice, touching for an instant with one cool hand the fluffy fair hair upon her daughter's brow. "You are not to think silly things, Minnie. We can judge what is good for you and you need only obey."

But as Minnie closed her eyes dutifully, her soft cheek against the downy pillow, clear, in place of her mother's face, rose the thin, sweet, pallid face of Barclay's daughter bent steadfastly over her tireless sewing, following her hard path of duty as unquestioningly as she, yet what a different path!

"Poor little thing!" murmured Minnie, for Minnie's heart was tender. "Poor little brave Anne! Can she overcome temptation when so many cannot? Shall I tempt her and discover if there is a flaw in her conscience as in ours? Would it not be too bad to spoil the pretty picture of patience she makes as she is?"

But, unknowing of this, Anne was smiling the next day as she glanced up from her sewing at the little figure sitting opposite her. A small, deformed little fellow with great brown, wistful eyes and a mouth that betrayed much suffering.

He was fashioning paper flowers with remarkable taste for one so young.

"Of course it's tiresome, Anne," he said in a thin, chirping voice, his eyes lifted to her face, "an' it makes my back ache sometimes, but it's ever so much nicer'n settin' all day a-doin' nothin' when you an' marm an' lots of other folks is al'ays a-doin' things! Thinkin' of that helps me when I get real hard tired."

Then it was that Anne smiled. She leaned forward and with one white hand softly brushed the short brown hair from the boy's forehead.

"Like a brave boy!" she said, and her voice was tender like her smile, and her eyes lightened his soul. "It is such stuff that makes noble men, Dick!"

The little fellow nodded several times, keeping his lips shut tightly. By and by, very gravely he spoke, half musingly as though to himself more than to her.

"It don't somehow seem's though jest a little chap like me could ever grow up to be a real nice man, Anne, but I've thought consid'rable 'bout it an' I'm a-goin' to try to be the same as though I wasn't all crooked up, an' lame an' unbeautiful outside. Maybe if I do try hard, bein'

nice inside will make a shine through—like you, Anne, when you smile—an' folks'll like me an' know 't I tried to be brave."

"Of course they will," said Anne with such quiet conviction that the boy's lips parted to smile; "and anyway you will know that you did your very best, Dick. It is the trying, not the actual doing, that is most pleasing to God and ourselves. For we know when we do right or wrong as well as God does! And as I so often tell you, I am proud of my friend, Dick Chester!"

For some time they were silent, and then Dick added very softly,—

"Anne! My dad died when I was a mite of a chap—jest a baby, you know,—but marm tells me such nice stories about him, how kind he was and how much he done for her till he was hurt in the mills an' died an' went to heaven. That's my dad. Marm looks so sorry when she tells 'bout him it makes me sorry too. But he was good—my dad was, Anne!" His voice sunk to a low, half frightened tone. "Your dad ain't 's good as my dad, is he? 'Cause if he is," Anne leaned forward to touch her soft fingers to his lips to silence any hard word, but he turned his head aside to avoid her and would speak,—

"'cause if he is, I—am—glad God took him away to heaven!"

No smile on Anne's face now. Very grave it was, grieved and sad, and yet very, very tender. She let her sewing fall in her lap and still leaning forward, took the boy's two hands away from his work and clasped them close in hers, her eyes clear and steady, meeting his.

"But if God knows best, Dick dear!" she said, sweetly, an undertone in her voice that silenced his outspoken thought. "If God said that there was need for even a real bad man to live—though my father isn't bad, Dick, only weak and not always able to resist temptation—maybe to prove some one else, to strengthen some other character, to make obedient a rebellious heart, wouldn't you say too that you were glad he should live, and that you would still try very hard to be a nice man in spite of that? My father is very kind, Dick, when he is himself. Don't ever think otherwise. It is only when bad men tempt him that sometimes he forgets himself. It is worse for those who tempt him than it is for him to yield, for they know his weak will and make him fall. They do it for money, Dick; never, never, never because they care for him!"

The boy's face was paling before the soft vehemence of her voice, and the faint touch of red in her cheeks. He drew his hands away from her hold, but took one of hers in one of his own, patting the slim fingers with mute regret for his words.

"I didn't know it was wicked to say that, Anne," he murmured wistfully. "I wouldn't have said it for anything if I'd thought it was. Only I thought so much 'bout you an' us—settin' alone by myself when marm was away an' I hadn't you to come to—an' it seemed so dreadful for you—some things did—that I said to myself, I was glad it couldn't happen to marm an' me! But I'm sorry, Anne, real sorry if I've made you feel bad, an' I won't even think such things again!"

She knew that he meant it; that he was such a brave little fellow that he would subject even his thought to his will. Others might not speak of it: he would not even allow himself to think of it! His will was remarkable in his effort to be a "nice" man. The sternness of her face softened; her eyes smiled, then her lips, and her face was alight meeting his troubled eyes. She withdrew her hand from his with a gentle pat upon his thin hand, and resumed her sewing.

"Remember, Dick dear," she said softly, the brave smile still lingering about her lips and in her eyes, "whenever you see—anything wrong with—my father, that it is not nearly so wicked for him to yield to temptation with his weak will, as it is for those who know and tempt him. We are judged according to our abilities and not according to what we do."

"An' then is Mr. Dean wicked, Anne?" queried the boy sorrowfully, resuming his work as she took up her sewing. "Mr. Dean's al'ays so nice to me even when the other fellers tease me, is he wicked too?"

A strange shyness touched the girl's face. Her head drooped lower over her sewing. Her eyes were hidden by their silken brown lashes; for a moment her hand trembled, guiding her needle. Then she lifted her head with quiet dignity, answering him.

"Mr. Dean is a bartender, Dick. He may not drink himself; he may even not realize how much harm he is doing selling liquor to others according to the rule of that saloon, but every glass he serves is so much crime, for it wakens the appetite and weakens the will, and there are so many other saloons not far from Mr. Millard's where they will have no trouble in buying all

they wish. He may be very kind--he has been kind to me, too, Dick, but he must know that their traffic is not good. Mr. Millard says that he does no harm. Broken hearts and broken homes tell different stories!"

Her voice trembled with her earnestness, her hands trembled too. Then she regained her calm self-control and rose as a light tap upon the door announced a visitor.

CHAPTER III.

TEMPTED.

"Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."—*Bible.*

"COME in," said Anne quietly, all trace of her excitement gone, as she crossed to the door, opening it to admit her visitor. Anne's occupation sometimes brought her many visitors.

Pretty Miss Millard hesitated an instant on the threshold. There was a flush as of embarrassment on her delicate face and her eyes were shy, meeting the other girl's sweet, true face and gentle eyes. Then she entered the room, graciously smiling across at Dick as she caught sight of him beside Anne's chair. A subtle fragrance was clinging about her as she came like a charming vision into the plain little room.

Anne placed a chair for her with a gentle word of welcome, for this was not their first meeting. Many times this pretty daughter of Millard left her handsome home to come to this slim, pale girl in her poor little rooms as though there were some charm about the quiet, grave

girl that touched even this other's gay heart and careless life.

"Always busy!" said pretty Miss Millard waving aside the chair with a slight gesture of one gloved hand and crossing to Anne's work table, still smiling upon Dick. "I hope that you are not too busily engaged, Anne! Mamma sent me to ask you if you can come to us to-morrow? We have a perfect stack of sewing to be done. It will surely take you weeks to do it, though mamma said two weeks; but I say if any one can do so much in that time they must be fairies! Though maybe you are a fairy," she added, a swift change in her voice as she turned to Anne. "You look like an angel, Anne, with your face and eyes after Raphael's Madonna, but maybe you're really only a fairy! What do you think, little lad?"

Dick felt a sudden dislike of this pretty, volatile girl—Millard's daughter. He closed his lips tightly and shook his head, his fingers closing upon the arms of his chair as he looked frankly up at this woman who could smile so easily and talk without thought!

"She's good," he said emphatically. "Real good, Miss Millard! She can't be an angel, for you have to be dead before you can be angels;

an' she ain't a fairy, I know, for fairies haven't any souls! But she's good. Everybody says 't Anne's good!"

Miss Millard nodded.

"No doubt of that, laddie. She's good, angel or demon. And now will you come, Anne? I don't think the work is so very hard, but there is plenty of it, and mamma wishes it done at home. There is too much to send out, and she is dreadfully particular, you know. She always wishes to see each garment as it is under way and finished. You must come, Anne. We will treat you well."

Pretty Miss Millard was not herself that morning, and Anne recognized this upon her first entrance into the room. The flush upon her face was also marked. Anne believed, and a slow, faint color crept to her own cheeks, that her conversation with Dick regarding this girl's father had been overheard. She would not wound one person for another's sin, and she strove at once to remove any unpleasant embarrassment that her words might have caused.

"You know that I do all my work here at home, Miss Millard," she said gently, and her rare smile would have healed any wound that words could make. "I could not go away

during the day, for father often requires me here days as well as evenings. If your mother will not let me bring the work home, I fear I must refuse it. I don't want to," her eyes smiled now as well as her lips, "for I want all the work I can get, but I could not leave home for father's sake, Miss Millard. He has no one but me."

Miss Millard laughed, laying one hand lightly on Anne's arm.

"You should consider before you refuse," she said more earnestly. "Shouldn't she, Dick? We want you; you want to do the work, and surely your father could let you come during the day. We intended keeping you at the house until the work was completed, but I told mamma that I knew that is impossible! You see I know you, Anne Barclay, and she said to secure your promise for the days. You must come!"

Anne shook her head gently, but in a way that proved that she was not to be moved from what she considered her duty.

"You and your mother are very kind, Miss Millard," she said, "but I cannot leave home for any length of time. Sometimes father comes home unexpectedly, and sometimes he doesn't go out at all, and if I were away what

would he do? He could not get his own meals or do the work!"

"You might do the work before you leave here," urged Miss Millard, in a voice of unusual sweetness. She went there that morning especially to prove the girl. Her own conscience was not clear, and this girl's sweet patience and undeviating bravery in the hard life-struggle troubled her. She knew that her one sorrow was her father's intemperance. She also knew that her father frequented her father's saloon, and even if he were not allowed to become intoxicated there, he was given enough to waken a craving for more and cause him to seek other saloons.

Liquor in her own home was an every-day affair, but she seldom saw any one under its influence. Wine was always on their table. Wine was her mother's remedy and tonic. Wine was given her from the time she was restless in her cradle until that day. She had heard it spoken of as good in its place, and its misuse was due to the person using it, not to the man who sold it! No one man was another man's keeper! If a man would drink, he would drink somewhere; what more harm was it for her father to sell it to him than for some other man?

She knew that Anne Barclay gave up much for her father; she could not believe that she would give up a comfortable sum of money—such as they would pay her if she went to them—just for the sake of her drunken father's comfort!

"Your father would be willing, I am sure, Anne," she said coaxingly. "He would not stand in your light. No father would. Say that you will come! Mamma likes you better than any one to sew for her, and I like you for yourself! Don't refuse me!"

Anne's eyes were wistful as Dick's own eyes were, watching her. Dick loved her, and he knew that she was troubled.

Still Anne shook her head.

"I cannot leave home for father's sake even if I must lose the work," she said very gravely and sweetly. "My mother left me to care for him when she died. I must keep my promise to her. If I may have the work here, I will do it as carefully as though I were in your home, Miss Millard; but if I may not have it here, I must refuse to do it. I am very, very sorry, but I cannot do otherwise."

"I thought you were too womanly always to stand in your own light, Anne!" said Miss Mil-

lard tauntingly. "It is because you will not come, not because you cannot!"

Dick rose. His face was quivering. He was deadly pale.

"No, Miss Millard!" he said in indignant defence of his friend. "Anne is good! She gives up a hundred times more than you would for your father! I can't bear to have folks say hard things to her, and they sha'n't while I'm here!"

For a moment Miss Millard stood motionless and rather scornful before them. Then she turned to Anne, a flush on her face, holding out both hands with a pretty gesture of deprecation.

"Anne! Anne!" she cried softly. "I did not mean to wound you! I would not do it, truly! I cannot help my father's fault or his wrong to others! Forgive me, Anne Barclay, and help me!"

Dick sunk back into his chair, his indignation suddenly changed to sympathy. He clasped his hands among the bits of paper and half-made flowers in his lap, his large, grave eyes searching Miss Millard's face, his lips quivering with excitement, his face softened with earnest pity.

Anne, half timidly, half tenderly, took the

outstretched hands in hers as she answered the bitter cry from a wakened heart.

"Dear Miss Millard," she said sweetly, drawing the girl toward a chair and pressing her very gently into it, her hand upon her shoulder, "you must not think of such a thing! You have always been kind to me—you and your mother, and I could not forget that in spite of any sorrow that comes to me through my father's weakness!"

"But my father!" interrupted Minnie sadly. "He has not been kind, and yet, Anne, he is the dearest and best, the most kind, most thoughtful of fathers to me! There is nothing possible which he would not do for any one who needed or asked of him! And he does not think that it is wrong, his—business! He does not wish to spoil your life, or any one's. If I should tell him this he would not believe it his fault."

"You must not think of it any more," said Anne quietly. "In any case it is no fault of yours, Miss Millard. No one could blame you, and I suppose that a man should have enough will and self-respect to overcome temptation; but it is not easy to all men; and be this as it may, no one can excuse the wilful sale of that

which ruins manhood and home and future happiness."

Her lips were stern though her voice was kind, and with her eloquent face before her, Miss Millard realized that great sin could grow and thrive from the tiniest seed constantly scattered, the thorns and weeds garnered in for those who are innocent of the sowing! Our harvest is not always as we sow, but as those who sow before us. We answer in part for their sin.

Miss Millard spread out her two pretty hands in passionate protest.

"But if your father or any one dies a drunkard's death, it is not my father's fault, Anne Barclay! The liquor which my father sells is what you can get anywhere else, save that it is always the very best. If he did not sell it, some other man would, and probably with far less principle about it. His mode of selling it is almost a charity in itself, for it places a certain restraint upon all his customers. Not one ever leaves there intoxicated, unless he was in that condition before entering there, and then he never has his order filled for him. Even you, with your prejudice, can see what a restraint this must be."

"How much of a restraint?" queried Anne sadly, her large dark eyes growing wistful as they met those of the saloon-keeper's daughter. "Do not think me prejudiced, Miss Millard, but how much of a restraint is this mode of selling liquor? Only for so long as until the man who desires a glass or a dozen glasses more than are good for him can go to another saloon. And this, possibly, on the very next block. Because liquor will be sold, is it any excuse for you or me to sell it? Because wrong is done, are we to join the wrong-doers? Because Lucifer revolted from heaven, did all the angels fall?"

"But that is an exploded theory," said Miss Millard somewhat contemptuously. "Milton's 'Paradise Lost' is well enough as a poem, but it will not hold in science. That is no argument at all, Anne."

"It is not from a scientific standpoint, I know," affirmed Anne still sweetly and sadly, "but it represents exactly my meaning, Miss Millard. Because there is evil in the world, are we all to choose evil? Because one man has enough will-power to go just so far and never deviate from the right, ninety-nine men would inevitably fall. You must acknowledge that. You see it every day everywhere."

Miss Millard frowned. Miss Millard was very pretty; her brow was white and smooth; her eyebrows arched; frowns did not become her. Her curved red lips grew unpleasantly straight. She knew that she had lost this argument, but she would not yield to this sweet, pale girl pleading for her father and other men like him. She shrugged her shoulders, turning away, not even glancing at Dick.

"Which means of course that you will not come to sew for mamma," she said carelessly. "As you like, Anne. Mamma likes your sewing, and it would have helped you a good deal, but there are plenty of others who will be glad enough to come."

She crossed the room and laid one hand lightly upon the door-handle, turning it, when a step sounded upon the stairs. A heavy, stumbling, uncertain step. A step that seemed to bring every drop of blood in Anne Barclay's body to her cheeks and then fade, leaving her like marble. Some one was muttering in an imbecile manner in the outer hall.

Miss Millard looked at Anne, removed her hand from the door and hesitated, not knowing what to do. Instinctively she knew who the newcomer was.

Then, forgetting her pretty visitor, Anne looked toward Dick, with a half smile on her lips, as though partly to reassure him, partly to recall to his mind the promise he had given her not to think ill of her father should he see him in his weakness, and crossing to the door opened it to admit her father as she always did, stepping into the hall to offer him her assistance. Very gentle and sweet was her voice when she spoke, not a hint of harshness in it.

"I am glad that you are home early, father," she said. "Come in. Miss Millard is here, and Dick. Dick has been keeping me company while you were away. You always liked Dick, you know."

Dick knew why she urged this upon her father; Miss Millard guessed it too, but neither was prepared for his reception of it.

He was not in a state of beastly intoxication; it would have been easier for them had he been so; but he had taken just enough liquor to set a bullying demon in his breast. He swayed into the room and paused, holding to the door to steady himself.

For a moment he stood staring uncertainly at all three; then with a sudden assumption of his lost strength he straightened up, throwing back

his shoulders and clenching his hands. His eyes were bloodshot and bleared.

"And what's Millard's daughter a-doing here?" he demanded wrathfully. "The mighty pious saloon-keeper who sets himself up above the rest of us, and talks so big about doing good to his feller men! If he's got such a scrupulous conscience he'd ought to quit sellin' liquor and take to preaching, instead of preaching and sellin' on the quiet at the same time! Millard's an old hypocrite, that's what he is, and no call for his daughter to come to my house. I tell her so. I ain't afraid of bein' open and honest, and sayin' what I mean."

Anne's delicate face was paling and flushing alternately. She knew the utter impossibility of silencing him, and only attempted to divert his attention.

"It is almost dinner-time, father, but if you wish I will get it at once. You must be hungry after walking in this cold wind. Dick and I planned a treat for you. Just wait till I cook it, and you shall taste. Thin, crisp fried potatoes and the tenderest lamb-chop and pie—pumpkin-pie, father, like grandma used to make in the old farmhouse when we went for Thanksgiving.

Doesn't that make you hungry and wish your dinner right away ?"

She laughed and tried to make him laugh with her at this old memory.

For a moment he softened. Perhaps the memory of his mother was strong upon him, and his great life failure stood out blackly against that. Then with a muttered imprecation upon all women but his frail, pale daughter in particular, he swayed, turned upon her, and lifted his clenched, trembling hand, denouncing her.

"A great treat, oh, a grand treat truly for a poor old man like me, who am constantly starved and turned away and ill-treated even by my own girl. And Dick, too. Dick learns fine things from you of respect for his elders. When I was a boy the young folks were taught to care for the old ones, but now it's turned around. Great fellows like you, Dick Chester, living on your marm, and I kept continually half starved by my own daughter. A treat—a mighty treat! I'll show you what's a treat. I'll teach you not to be making up to a stuck-up saloon-keeper's daughter, Anne Barclay. I'll let you know, and others too, that I'm as good as they, if I am only old Jack Barclay !"

Dick was trembling and pallid, shrinking back

in his chair. He knew what it was when this man was in a drunken rage. But Dick was no coward if he was physically small and weak and deformed. He summoned his courage and arose, overcoming his terror, to defend Anne. He knew that she would need to be defended.

Miss Millard still stood uncertainly before the door. In all her life she had never witnessed a scene like this, and she did not know what was likely to follow, but she was afraid of this brutish-spoken man so sadly contrasted with his daughter. The words regarding her own father stung her deeply, but the conviction was growing upon her that the seed which he sowed, even with the best intention, was evil seed. Then she uttered a cry and started forward.

For Anne staggered, falling back, lifting one thin, white hand to cover the dark spot upon her cheek where her father's hand had fallen upon her, in spite of Dick's half-sobbing effort to defend her.

And yet that very night the conscientious proprietor of Millard's model saloon, unmindful of the sorrow or degradation rising from even his carefully sown seed of evil, planned for the future of his daughter, herself to witness the effect of liquor upon one man!

"Cartwright is an excellent young fellow," he said to his wife, sitting before the cheerful grate fire in the handsome library. "An excellent fellow, Mary. He has fine prospects in business, a fair fortune, and good habits. What more could we desire for our girl's husband? Minnie is accomplished and pretty, and her blood is as good as his. His blood is blue enough, to be sure. As to her fortune, I rather think that I can attend to that. They have been out considerably together of late, and as Cartwright seems interested, perhaps it would be as well to encourage their friendship. There are so many worthless young men nowadays that it is well to retain all such as he."

Mrs. Millard approved of young Cartwright herself, but she considered it wise to frown upon her husband's plain speech for a time.

"I have no fault to find with Mr. Cartwright," she said sweetly, "but when it comes to speaking seriously of any settlement for our Minnie, I cannot reconcile myself to the thought that when she marries she will never be so thoroughly our own as she is now. She is still so young, Harry!"

"She is twenty," was the calm reply; "and we should not be selfish, Mary. I do not be-

lieve in long engagements or late marriages. Minnie is as old as most girls when they marry, and we should look out for her good. I shall invite Cartwright to dine here to-morrow night, and we will get up a theatre party for the evening. I wish to see myself how they act together."

Mrs. Millard knew enough of her husband's disposition not to oppose him in this. She merely said that to her Minnie seemed yet but a child. Marriage would break up their old relations to each other; the child a woman, the old home yielded for a new.

"And that is why," continued Mr. Millard, undisturbed, "I wish to establish a friendship between our daughter and young Cartwright before she gives her affections to some one else. You are a woman, and tactful and wise about these things, Mary, and must acknowledge that I am doing the best thing possible now."

In consequence of which young Cartwright was invited to dine at Mr. Millard's handsome house the following evening, and also to meet pretty Miss Millard, which was inevitable and pleasant.

Young Cartwright admired Miss Millard because, as he stated in speaking of her, there was very little nonsense about her. She could talk

well; she danced delightfully, and she sung. He enjoyed watching the sparkles in her bright eyes when she talked, and the dimples deepen around the smiling lips. Her father had money, too, and money was desirable. He had a fortune in his own right, but hers would add to this pleasurably. An easy life was impossible without money, and he liked an easy life.

Then, too, if he married Minnie Millard—and he had pondered the question often—her nature would impel her to be devoted to him and easily managed. He would never hear woman's rights discussed in his home; no one would dispute his decisions.

Rather a pleasant prospect, pondering upon it pro and con!

Cartwright received the informal note of friendly invitation from Mr. Millard, as he was dressing the next morning. He delayed his toilet to consider once more as to whether or not he should let things drift along, and go with the tide and marry this charming girl. He did not once consider that she might possibly have a different voice in the matter. He was a favorite among the ladies and believed himself irresistible. It simply remained for him to make up his mind and all things would be according to his wish.

He did not love Minnie Millard, and he knew this quite well, but what then? He loved no other woman and he might come in time to love her. Certainly she was charming. With love lived always jealousy; without love they would be more comfortable! And then there were her position and wealth. The balance swayed low down now in her favor.

He sat before his dressing-case and thought deeply. He must decide now and drift with this fair tide or turn and set out in some other way through life, and life was short at best. He re-read the brief, good-natured but utterly informal note, and read shrewdly much between the lines, and then sat staring at himself in the mirror. Should he go?

"I'll do it!" he said suddenly, rising and laying aside the note. "Millard's a father-in-law of whom one need not be ashamed if he is a liquor-seller; he's a philanthropist as well and immensely wealthy. Mrs. Millard is handsome and well-bred, and blue blood, too, as I happen to know. As for Minnie, she is a pretty little thing, and will make a charming mistress of my house. No preaching behind the scenes from her! No lectures on temperance when wine comes on the table! Some women make fools of themselves

about that! There's poor Ned Granger with a lecture every week, because he will take his glass of wine at the Club! No more steady fellow than Ned. But if I marry Minnie Millard there will be no such scenes for me, for she takes it sensibly herself. I'll say 'yes' to your invitation, Mr. Millard, and go to-night, and go, too, with this tide!"

And so young Cartwright settled the fate of pretty Minnie Millard as well as his own, but gave no thought that his will might not be hers also. His pleasure should be hers, and he was satisfied. So he decided.

Mrs. Millard was a charming hostess; she was haughty if she chose, but when she would she could be a delightful woman. She chose to be specially winning to Mr. Cartwright, and he felt the charm of her graciousness. Millard also in his large-hearted, generous way made his guest feel his welcome. They talked on every subject of interest with wit and keen appreciation of their subject during the long dinner.

The dinner itself was everything that a dinner should be, and wine was upon the sideboard and every one drank of it. Pretty Miss Millard smiled upon him, her eyes very bright over her wine-glass as they drank each the other's health

and happiness after the old custom of the house, and not one of them held wine as other than one of the natural courses to a dinner and a companion to wit.

"If you have the slightest scruple about taking wine, I hope that you will not hesitate about speaking of it," said his host as he lifted his own glass. "Many have such scruples and perhaps you are among them, Cartwright. I consider myself a temperance man, for temperance means moderation and not entire abstinence; but I hope that you will speak if you wish. Remember that we honor our guests!"

Mr. Cartwright smiled. He smiled across at his host, but in some way it strayed around to Minnie, ere it died from his lips.

"I could not fail to be assured of that," he replied; "and I thank you for your consideration, Mr. Millard; but like yourself I am a temperance man, not a teetotaler! I know how much is good for me and never overstep the bounds. I would not fail to drink your health in this delightful fruitage! Doing so could bring no one to harm."

He smiled once more, but now the smile was only for Miss Minnie, and the warm glow of the wine spread up her cheeks as the long lashes fell

for a moment hiding the bright, sweet eyes. And after dinner she sung for him at his request a dainty love song, with her half shy eyes and pretty face turned aside from his eyes!

And later he was her escort at the theatre, and surely, he said, all was going well, following his careful plans!

CHAPTER IV.

A SOFTER HEART.

"The light of love, the purity of grace,
The mind, the music breathing from her face,
The heart whose softness harmonized the whole,
And oh! that eye was in itself a Soul!"

—*The Bride of Abydos.*

"ANNE!"

Dick glanced swiftly up as Anne rose to greet her visitor. Dick was always with Anne when it was possible, for his mother was away from home a good deal, and she felt that there could be no better place for her boy during her absence, than with this girl. And Dick loved Anne.

A frown gathered upon his brow when he saw the newcomer. He had not yet forgiven Miss Millard for her harshness to his friend upon her last visit, and it was Miss Millard who now called Anne from the doorway.

"Anne!"

"Will you come in, Miss Millard?" queried Anne in her soft voice, as though there had never passed between them any word of other

than good-will. "You are kind to come again this morning. Is there anything that I can do for you?"

She placed a chair for her guest as she rose, going toward her.

Miss Millard smiled. She crossed the room to Anne, laying her hand upon her shoulder.

"Anne dear," she said very sweetly, her eyes steadily meeting the other's quiet eyes, "I have come to tell you that mamma is satisfied with no one's work but yours, and had rather have it done away from home than not to have you do it! As you cannot go to us, I have brought it to you. You will not again refuse it, will you?"

"You are kind," said Anne gently. Her eyes were soft and dark with emotion. "Certainly I shall not refuse, Miss Millard! On the contrary the work is very acceptable to me, and I can promise that it shall be carefully done."

"We know that," replied Miss Millard carefully. "See what it is to have a good reputation even for work, Anne! We are sure that we may rely upon you even if you say no word, because you always do your best. Perhaps it would be better if there were more like you in that. What have you to say about it, Dick?"

Dick had been regarding her respectfully but earnestly since she entered the room. Miss Millard could be very pleasant, but Anne was his friend, and Dick was loyal to his friends.

"God makes folks different," he said sturdily, his slim fingers busy among the soft, colored papers in his lap. "Anne says so, an' she knows, Miss Millard. If everybody was just alike I don't think it would be a bit nice; an' besides no one could be jest like Anne!"

"No," acquiesced Miss Millard very gently and gravely now, as she seated herself for a moment beside Dick, with a tender show of interest in his work; as Anne with her usual thoughtfulness brought a glass of water for her guest, and then seated herself at her sewing. "No. Anne means Anne individually and not a sect or class. You are right there, laddie Dick! Anne, had you a lover, he would be terribly jealous of this friend of yours!"

Anne glanced up quickly, a keen expression, passing instantly, in her eyes as she searched the opposite pretty face set round about by its delicate wrappings.

"I have no lover," she replied quietly. But she wondered if love had stirred the heart of Miss Millard, that the warm color should so

flush upon it at this commonplace speech. "My friends are good to me and thoughtful, Miss Millard, but what should I do with a lover? Unless it were Dick!" she added laughing. "I think that I am very fond of Dick!"

"Oh, I don't mean that sort of a lover!" replied Miss Millard, also laughing, though the color flickered and waved in her face as she inspected with exceeding care a bit of Dick's work. "Not a boy lover, Anne, but something like our old fairy stories, you know, with a handsome prince and a handsome sleeping princess and all that! Then the prince comes and the princess wakes, and there is happiness in plenty! That is what I mean! That is what you deserve, Anne Barclay! Isn't it, Dick?"

Dick's face betrayed somewhat dubious thought, and even the charming smile all for himself on Miss Millard's lips could not hasten his decision. His pale, pain-touched face was in great contrast to the pretty, care-free, almost childish face bending above him, and to a degree his soul was in like contrast with her soul.

She noticed his delay and shrugged her dainty shoulders suggestively.

"Perhaps you know very little about fairy tales or magic princes, Dick," she said. "Now-

adays our lads and lassies are given tables of gold and silver to puzzle over, instead of Jack and his wonderful bean-stalk, that literally translated means Jack and his determination to rise! They are not wise, Dick! Fairy stories are suited to young minds, and life is rough enough at best by and by!"

"And then you know Anne is a princess," added Dick with a sudden brightening of his face and a catch of his breath with the new thought, as he leaned forward in this excitement, his elbows on his knees and his hands clasped, outstretched, to emphasize his words. "She is a daughter of the King, you know, Miss Millard, an' if she don't dress like the fairy stories now, some day she shall have a gown that is so white it will shine like snow, an' be beautiful always, an' not have to work so hard nor cry because——"

And there Dick paused. In his small way Dick was a prince too, for he was courteous and thoughtful of others. To have finished his speech about Anne's father would have been breaking his promise never to think hard of him, and also would have betrayed to an outsider that which she locked in her own heart. So Dick paused; but Miss Millard knew.

"And then," said Anne very calmly, not showing the pain in her heart because of her father's wrong doing, "fairy tales are not so suitable for us now as they used to be, Miss Millard, when children were kept young and did not have to earn their own living away from home as they do now, many of them. Now all that some parents seem to think of is to hurry their children's growth so that they may shift for themselves! But you, and Dick and I live just as true lives, I am sure, as though fairies did our sewing or paper-cutting, or weaving while we slept! Then, too, what I do myself I am sure is done right; I might not trust even a fairy!"

She laughed; a sweet, low, tender sound helpful for one to hear.

Miss Millard involuntarily held her breath to hear, as though she would wish to hear more of such music, and then rose uneasily, feeling that Barclay's daughter was miles away from her in height of heart and soul.

Dick's pale face flushed slightly and glowed with pleasure as he caught her laughter. His clasped hand relaxed and he resumed his work comforted and helped.

Anne laid aside her sewing and rose with her guest.

"I have only to finish this one piece, Miss Millard," she said, with a pretty gesture toward the garment she had just laid down, "and then I shall be ready for your work. You do not know how glad I shall be to have it! And tell your mother for me, please, that I am very grateful to her for her kind belief in me!"

Miss Millard nodded. She was not thinking of work; she was pondering over the difference in their lives, and wondering if it were possible that this girl might have a lover in her station as she had in hers. And should this be true, would he turn out a copy of her brutish father?

"You may trust mamma's belief in you," she said absently yet smiling. "But I was thinking, Anne, when I saw those flowers on your stand that maybe after all my quiet girl had a lover. Flowers mean that, you know!"

"Do they?" queried Anne, still quietly though there was a touch of color in her face. "But these do not, Miss Millard. Mr. Dean is always thoughtful. He passes here every day and sent these to me by Dick this morning. That is all. He is thoughtful of every one; it is his way. He is kind to Dick—and me—and father. Isn't he, Dick?"

Dick nodded emphatically.

"Mr. Dean's al'ays kind," he said concisely but convincingly. "He asks me 'bout Anne 'most every day, an' to-day he give me these for her. He said 't his sister an' him 'd been out by the Park an' gathered a lot. Goldenrod, he said, an' asters—late flowers. He said 't his sister likes 'em an' maybe Anne would. He didn't call her 'Anne,' of course. I wouldn't 'a' let him do that, but he spoke nice an' kind an' said how good it was that I had her for a friend. Everybody knows Anne around here, you see. But he ain't Anne's lover. I know he ain't. If he'd 'a' loved her don't you s'pose he'd 'a' telled me? 'Tain't Mr. Dean's way to be sly!"

A smile crossed Miss Millard's lips, but she checked it instantly. The boy was too earnest to be laughed at. There was a flash in Anne's eyes too as they met Miss Millard's, but it may have been tears.

"I know Mr. Dean," Miss Millard said sweetly, "though I have never more than spoken to him. Papa thinks a good deal of him; he says he is a fine fellow; I am glad that he is your friend, Anne. I shall class him as mine after this!"

"He's a man," said Dick championly, "a man,

Miss Millard, as it's good to know. He's al'ays nice to Anne an' me!"

"And still," said Miss Millard archly, pausing on the threshold to smile back at this small defender, "flowers generally do mean lovers, Dick, lad! But Anne knows!"

"An' he'd 'a' told me," protested Dick stoutly, "he'd 'a' told me, Miss Millard, if he loved her."

"Oh!" said Miss Millard suggestively.

But Anne said nothing. What had she to say, remembering the scene enacted in that room not long before, though no word had passed between them regarding it? but it was in the mind of each and a certain restraint rested upon them in consequence. Continuing the conversation relating to Jim Dean was a piece of bravado on Miss Millard's part, for she knew perfectly well that this man was employed in her father's saloon, and that Anne's father was in the habit of going there. She did not speak of him from a vicious desire to wound the girl, but because her conscience would not be silenced and the trouble in her heart would be heard.

Anne felt this, but her calm face hid many sore heart-throbs, and even her faithful little friend did not know of the wound set aching by the careless words.

When Miss Millard was gone and Anne returned to her sewing, a streak of sunlight falling upon the yellow plumes of the goldenrod in the white pitcher upon the stand, Dick's eyes were keenly watching her with a new expression in them. Miss Millard's words rankled and he must set them straight.

As Anne seated herself opposite Dick she caught this troubled gaze and smiled. Anne could always smile for others.

"What is it, Dick dear?" she asked gently, laying her hand for an instant over his thin fingers. She was certain that she knew, but could she show her heart even to this warm friend? "Always when my laddie has that look in his eyes his heart is not quiet! Tell me if you can."

He lifted his head very proudly and tried to straighten his poor, deformed back, but the streak of pallor across his face proved that this was too much even for his brave spirit. Then, after a moment's silence, he told her his trouble.

"Anne, if Mr. Dean loved you he would have told me—wouldn't he? And he'd tell you! He ain't told me—ever—yet. And if he had told you, you'd 'a' told me, I know! Wouldn't you, Anne?"

Anne laughed now, softly and sweetly. She shook her head, still laughing, and sewed as though her life depended upon finishing the garment she held. There was the faintest trace of pink in her cheeks, and Dick's quick eyes perceived it.

"Miss Millard said 't flowers meant love, an' Mr. Dean did send 'em to you, Anne; but he didn't say 't he sent 'em because he loved you! He'd 'a' told me if he had thought it. He only said 't you might like 'em, an' that it was nice to have you for my friend. How does Miss Millard know? I don't like her, Anne. She says so many things——"

A slim white finger on Anne's lips warned him into silence, and Anne's sweet, grieved voice hushed the rebellion in his heart.

"Be careful, Dick dear! Miss Millard meant no harm; what she said was because she wished to be pleasant to us. She said herself that she knows nothing about Mr. Dean except that he is employed by her father and is faithful. And flowers mean kind thought and friendship as well as love, Dick. Rest assured that Mr. Dean has no more thought of love for me than I for him, and you know, laddie, that he could never be anything to me—he or any one—while he holds the position he does.

"So, now you are to put away all such thoughts, and remember only that Miss Millard does not look at the world with our eyes, and that Mr. Dean is only kindly thoughtful of our pleasure when he gives us flowers. I am very glad to have this sewing from Mrs. Millard. It will be a wonderful help toward winter comforts."

Usually Anne's wish was law with the boy, but now he had been too deeply touched to be easily appeased. He wished positive proof that there was only friendship between this friend of his and the other, and he had none.

For some time he was very quiet, bending industriously over his work, but the pucker between his brows remained and a strange sternness grew about his mouth. And after a while he spoke. Hesitatingly, for he feared Anne's anger, and in a thin undertone lest her father, returning, should overhear. For Dick was in deadly terror of John Barclay.

"Anne!"

"Yes, Dick."

"You ain't to think me impertinent, Anne, nor to say 'tain't none of my business, 'cause it is when it concerns you! Don't think anythin' but that I love you an' couldn't bear to

have you hurt. But, Anne! If maybe Miss Millard does know for sure that flowers do mean love, an' Mr. Dean, he sent you these for that, you wouldn't ever—ever—ever marry him, would you, Anne, remembering what he is an' what he might be if he keeps on so? I couldn't bear it, Anne, to have you hurt so—I couldn't, truly."

Straight from his heart came every thin, rapid word, she knew. Love for her and thought for her future good prompted the speech; she knew that also. But it was a daring speech after all, hinting as it did that this man might be what her father was, and for a moment the deadly pallor of her face and its gathering sternness frightened the boy. His hands were clasped in eager entreaty for her to understand his motive for speaking as he had done, and his face, too, was pale and quivering with the swift heart-throbs pulsing the words. His large eyes grew still larger, resting immovably upon her, waiting for her anger or her assurance of no ill.

But he should have known Anne Barclay better than to have ever feared her. He told himself this afterward.

Anne conquered her anger almost immediately; for just at first she was angry, and remem-

brance of what her father was and how impossible it was for such a boy as Dick Chester to see such things as he had seen when her father was mad with drink, without just this horror of the evil, softened all thought save gratitude for such a warm friend and defender of her happiness.

Still she must not allow him to utter such words implying disrespect for her father; she must simply convince him that there could be nothing between herself and Mr. Dean but thoughtful kindness upon his part and appreciation of this on hers. It was absurd to talk of love to her. And as for marrying—why, she should never marry. Her duty was with her father, and she could expect no one to be so lenient toward him as herself, certainly she could never ask for such concession on the part of any other. Jim Dean was nothing to her; desired to be nothing to her; could be nothing!

Dick's pale little face touched her deeply as she looked down upon it when she had overcome her anger and could answer him. She leaned forward with a sudden impulse and took it between her hands, smiling into his frightened eyes. After one swift instant of doubt, Dick smiled back at her, and she was fully repaid for

any struggle she had endured to conquer her first impulse of anger.

"My little lad, Anne has never told you what was not so in all her life. What I have told you of this is the truth. Dick dear, do you not know that there could be nothing between a man who sells liquor—or takes it—and myself? Laddie, the Wise Book says: 'Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.' In the bitterness and sorrow of my heart I tell you true of this. You need not fear for me!"

Mr. Millard's plan for his daughter was working well. As he sat with his wife one evening in their luxurious sitting-room he expressed his satisfaction.

"Really, Mary, I did not think that our plan would succeed so well as it has regarding our two young people!"

Mr. Millard stretched his slippered feet upon the fender, leaning back in his reclining-chair with the air of a man perfectly satisfied with himself and the world generally. He had been reading a newspaper, and rustled it upon his knee as he talked with his wife, waiting for her reply.

Mrs. Millard was never hasty in replying. She considered what she should say before she spoke.

She was not one to be caught by foolish words. She did not now at once answer her husband. She had agreed with him in the match between their daughter and young Cartwright, but there were many twists and counter-currents in love matters which perhaps her husband disregarded; and a hasty decision by an outsider would be unwise.

She had been her daughter's confidante to a degree, but, being a woman herself, she knew that her daughter did not tell her all that was in her heart. What woman would? So she sat silent for a few moments, her hands languidly moving in the midst of a film of lace which she was making, as she pondered what she should say. She knew that her husband waited her answer, and she was in no hurry to give it.

"Minnie has a warm heart," she said presently in a voice which her husband found difficult to analyze. But then her husband often found his wife a trying subject to comprehend. This speech of hers regarding their daughter might mean many things. He frowned, and moved his feet impatiently upon the fender. "I think that we may depend upon her decision, Harry; but a girl's heart is a curious affair."

"Fiddlesticks!" retorted her husband some-

what testily. "What has a girl's heart to do with this, pray? You speak as though we intended selling off our daughter like a white slave! You know, and she knows as well, that I would not for all the gold in the world have her marry a man whom she did not wish to marry! I wish her heart to go out to Cartwright because he is such a fine fellow, but if it hasn't and she cannot fancy him, what could I do to force her to marry him—I, who care as much for our girl as any father could? You talk in riddles, my dear. Minnie surely could never hold such a thought in her mind."

Mrs. Millard smiled calmly upon her rather excited husband. Mrs. Millard understood their daughter much better than did her husband. Their wish was the same as a given law to their daughter. She would do her part toward caring for young Cartwright because they desired it! Her mother knew that.

"She knows of course that neither of us thinks of her in connection with trade, Harry," she said in her sweet, cool voice. "I know that she likes young Cartwright. Love is another thing, but I believe that we need not fear for that. He certainly shows her very marked attentions."

"Where have they gone to-night? To the

Hartwell ball? I know that I had a pretty large dry-goods bill to meet yesterday, so I guessed that it must be this grand affair!"

Mr. Millard spoke jovially. He never made any objection to their bills.

"It is the Hartwell ball, of course," said Mrs. Millard, in smiling reply. She understood her husband's humors better than he did himself. "I really think, Harry, that you should be congratulated upon your plan and its success so far. Young Mr. Cartwright was her escort, of course. She looked very beautiful. At first she was fatigued after driving this afternoon and her numerous calls, but a glass of wine brightened her up wonderfully, and she went off looking like her usual self."

A slight frown touched her husband's genial face. His eyes for a moment searched her face keenly. Then he said rather more sharply than he generally addressed her:

"I hope, Mary, that you do not too often resort to liquor to refresh Minnie when she is fatigued. It is a stimulant, you know, and she is too young to need such to any extent. Her young blood should refresh itself with rest."

Mrs. Millard shrugged her handsome shoulders, and elevated her brows in surprise.

"I scarcely think that I understand you, Harry," she said coldly, and her cold eyes made him uncomfortable as they met his own. "Do you mean that you fear my judgment in caring for our daughter's health? Do you insinuate that you fear I may make her a drunkard?"

Mr. Millard compressed his lips sternly as though the word hurt him, and rustled the paper with considerable force as he crossed one leg over the other knee.

"I mean that I should regret more than words can tell, should our daughter grow to be dependent upon wine or any such stimulant for her wit and bright eyes," he said steadily and sternly. "You might not think of the dangerous consequences of a glass of wine upon every occasion of exhaustion, Mary. If such a curse ever should fall upon me after the care I have taken to be always honorable, it would be my death blow! There would be nothing left for me to live for. I should not care to live!"

He was very bitter, very sad and stern. Mrs. Millard was startled out of her usual calm by his voice and manner. She was considerably disturbed, too, but she would not betray this to him.

"I never give Minnie one drop too much of any stimulant," she said quietly; "and there is

no need for you to go off on the heroics because she had one glass of wine before leaving home to-night!"

"No doubt I was foolish," acknowledged her husband gently. "Surely I may trust you, my dear, with the happiness of our daughter, when for so many years you have made my happiness! It is simply a rather sore subject with me, that is all. We will forget it at once. There are more pleasant things to talk about than that, and we live as nearly right as one can."

But Mr. Millard would not have been so well satisfied with his wife and himself in their treatment of their daughter, could he have known that when Minnie returned, wearied, from the ball she went at once to the little closet where her wine was kept, and poured out a brimming glass.

"I am so very, very tired," she said to herself in excuse for this, Anne Barclay's face suddenly startling her memory as she lifted the glass red with the wine and the false strength she craved. "Mamma always gives it me when I am so tired and it rests me. Besides I shall need something to make me sleep after the excitement of this evening. The grandest ball I ever attended and the loveliest time!"

She replaced the bottle and glass and turned to her dressing-case, her eyes once more bright with the effect of the wine.

"Why should I let that Anne Barclay come forever between myself and my inclinations and actions? What is she to me?"

CHAPTER V.

ROCKY FORMATION.

"So when a raging fever burns,
We shift from side to side by turns,
And 'tis a poor relief we gain
To change the place, but keep the pain."

— *Watts.*

"INFORM Mr. Cartwright that I shall be ready in one moment, Suzette," said Minnie Millard to her maid in her happy, sweetly modulated voice as she patted down an unruly crinkle in her hair, now on her forehead, now loosened from the coil at the back of her head, as she poised before the mirror in her pretty driving costume.

"Yes, Miss Minnie," murmured Suzette with an admiring backward glance at the charming little figure before the mirror, as she immediately obeyed her command, passing from the room.

"And now," said Minnie when her maid was gone, as she finished her toilette satisfactorily and turned from the mirror, "just to sort of brighten myself and keep from fatigue a glass of

wine is what I need. At least mamma advised it the last time I went out driving with Mr. Cartwright, and of course mamma knows!"

She laughed softly as she lightly crossed the room to her tiny medicine closet, and reached down a bottle and glass. Pouring out a full glass she lifted it daintily, and drank the contents as though it were in truth most pleasant medicine. Then she replaced the glass and left the room, a charming figure charmingly arrayed.

Young Mr. Cartwright was waiting for her, standing on the pavement beside the carriage, and as she appeared in the doorway he went forward to meet her, lifting his hat and reaching out his hand to assist her down the granite steps and into the waiting carriage. There was warm color in her face and her eyes were brilliant and flashing, looking into his shyly, as she followed his guidance. She smiled, too, as though she were half afraid of granting him too much grace, and noting all this, young Cartwright congratulated himself upon his steady common sense in choosing this woman for his wife.

"A pretty good match for me," he said to himself as he seated himself beside Minnie and took up the reins his groom was holding, the fine team of horses pricking their ears, alert to

go, at his lightest touch. "I shall ask her to-day to marry me."

Acting up to this decision he was particularly fascinating in conversation, and made himself so altogether charming that pretty little Minnie Millard fell easily into the net, and gave him a happy affirmative answer when at last he questioned her of her love for him. And so, knowing the desire of her parents, he knew that he had won her, and his plans were drifting easily with the tide!

The day was beautiful; the roads in excellent condition; the horses were perfect animals and perfectly matched.

Minnie Millard and Tom Cartwright, meeting many friends upon the road, were envied for their good fortune, each unconsciously congratulated because of the presence of the other. For Mr. Tom Cartwright was a fine young fellow and of fair fortune, while Millard's daughter was all that a daughter should be, and her dower would be such as no sensible man would scorn.

The day was beautiful, and the horses, traveling at a hard trot, were under perfect control until, turning a curve in the Park, a yellow parasol twirled by a careless hand made them mad with terror. There was a snort, a wild plunge

far to one side, and the frail carriage was whirled like a feather weight along the road to end in disaster unless speedily stopped.

A crowd gathered and followed. Crowds gather quickly at such times. A Park policeman, standing beside his horse, saw the runaway as it whirled in sight, and springing to his saddle, was off and away to the rescue.

But his effort was too late. The terrified animals were beyond control, and although young Cartwright held the reins in a powerful grasp, and spoke commandingly and quietly to them they were too excited and terrified to hear or heed.

Minnie was white and frightened, but would not hinder her companion by clinging to him as was her first impulse ; she sat swaying beside him in the wild race, one hand grasping the seat rail, the other keeping fast hold of the lap robe as though she might so keep a firm hold of her self-command.

A terrible couple of minutes or so—not long, yet seeming an eternity to those two actors in the hurried scene. The officer was almost upon them, had wheeled his horse across the road prepared to grasp the bridles and run them down to a stop, when, still mad with fear, distrusting

everything in their path, the runaways suddenly reared and plunged and dashed aside beyond the reach of the daring horseman, and dragged the carriage recklessly over the turf of the Mall, and stopped only when the wheels were crushed against a tree and their tangled harness hindered further running.

The carriage was completely demolished; the wheels upon one side were torn away and the body fallen forward hurled the occupants from their seats. Cartwright fell, but was up again after a moment of stunned pain. He bruised his shoulder and slightly sprained his arm.

As for poor little Minnie, she was less fortunate. She felt the full shock of the accident, being thrown so as to strike the body of the tree and hurled so back upon the wreck of the carriage. She was most tenderly raised and made as comfortable as circumstances permitted, until a carriage could be summoned to take her home. One arm was broken and she was so injured about her shoulders and head, as to be utterly unconscious until they had her upon her own bed at home, and the family physician was attending her.

It was no one's fault, every one said, and young Cartwright acted nobly in forgetting his own

pain to care for his companion, but it was a serious case, the physician said, and it would take time to tell the real extent of injury. There might be internal injuries of which he could not know at once. But all that was possible under the circumstances should be done for her to alleviate her suffering. The broken arm—the poor, pretty white arm so dimpled and soft—was set, and everything possible done and an anodyne administered to induce sleep and lessen pain.

"For quietness and sleep are what she will need most at present," the physician said as he turned from the sick-room with Mrs. Millard. The shock was terrible to the mother, but she possessed wonderful power of self-command, and only the pallor of her face betrayed her own suffering. "To-morrow I hope to find her improved, although I shall not make false promises, madame. And I shall send a nurse to you at once. She needs constant professional attention."

"She is seriously injured, you think, doctor?"

Mrs. Millard's voice was as quiet in speaking as though it were the most trivial matter she would decide, but the man beside her knew that she suffered.

"She is seriously injured, yes, Mrs. Millard,

but I hope not dangerously so. You must not worry. We will do all that we can."

And when the physician called the following day he found his patient indeed very quiet, although more feverish than he could have expected.

"She was so restless in the night," Mrs. Millard said, in explanation, as she met the doctor after leaving her daughter's room, "that the nurse and I agreed that she would perhaps sleep better for a little brandy. She went to sleep very soon after drinking it, and we have kept her quiet in this way since then. Do you not think that it was well?"

The physician frowned in displeasure; then with quick courtesy he smiled gravely.

"It certainly cannot hurt her," he said, "even if it cannot cure her, Mrs. Millard, if you are careful not to give her too much. Too much would tend to increase fever and excitement when quiet is an absolute necessity with her. But I may safely trust you and the nurse to see that she has no more than is good for her. Good-morning, madame."

"For," he added to himself as he entered his carriage at the steps, the frown again upon his face, "it is not probable that her mother would

allow her to have what is injurious to her. A mother is a mother everywhere. Liquor is excellent in its way, as Millard has proved, but if I thought that they would harm her with it," the frown deepened and his gaze was strangely contracted. "If I thought that they would, I should not allow one drop of liquor to pass her lips! But pshaw!" He shrugged his shoulders incredulously. "Is that at all probable?"

Nevertheless he shook his head doubtfully when he saw the condition of Millard's daughter on the following morning. She had been in a half stupor during the night, they told him, and had considerable fever, but was not restless if they took the precaution to administer a small dose of brandy at the first sign of uneasiness.

Her face was flushed rather than pale and she breathed heavily. The physician was considerably discomposed by these appearances. Outside of the natural fever that would rise from the shock and injury, the indications troubled him. The flush and stupor would not rise from these alone.

He shook his head.

"She is getting on as well as can be expected," he said gravely, "with the exception of this stupor. If she grows restless again, give her the

prescription I shall leave, but nothing else, to induce sleep, and I think she will do nicely. If you give her brandy for a tonic, give her only a half a glassful night and morning; that may help on her strength, but no more than that amount, as it tends to increase fever, as I feared. And above all, let her have perfect quiet."

The nurse had firm faith in the efficiency of liquor, but she knew that she must follow the physician's orders unless in an extreme case where there was no time to send for advice. She therefore promised faithful obedience to these commands, telling herself that she would use her own judgment, however, in the administration of the brandy. If a full glass induced quiet where a half glass would not, she should follow her own common sense about leaving her patient to toss restlessly or sleep with the aid of her own prescription.

She said nothing of this decision, even to Mrs. Millard; she would take the responsibility upon herself. Rest was essential, and rest the patient should have.

"We could expect little improvement to-day," Dr. Farjeon said, in reply to Mrs. Millard's anxious inquiries regarding her daughter's condition. "She is very weak and the least thing excites

her and heightens the fever. It will take time to give her back her old strength, and we can do nothing but see that she has the best of care and whatever will tone the nerves and remove the shock from the system. I have ordered less brandy, Mrs. Millard, and think that you will see the advantage very soon. Too much liquor is worse than no stimulant. It excites momentarily rather than it gives permanent strength."

"We gave her really very little," said Mrs. Millard in considerable displeasure. She was not so sensitive as her husband upon this subject of liquor, but she would allow no one to insinuate that she used it, or allowed it to be used carelessly in her house! "She was restless without it, doctor. It was well for her to have it under those circumstances, was it not?"

"We will see how she is to-morrow," said the physician, evasively.

"And poor Mr. Cartwright?" queried Mrs. Millard regretfully. "He received worse injury than at first he knew, did he not?"

"Mr. Cartwright was injured severely but not seriously, madame," Dr. Farjeon replied. Like most professional men he did not wish to make too full confession. "I left him in comparative comfort last night. I shall go there from here.

If you wish to send him any message I shall be pleased to deliver it."

"You are so kind," said Mrs. Millard in recovered good humor and kindness of heart. "If you will tell him how much we regret his illness I shall be so indebted to you, doctor. And tell him we hope to see him here as soon as he is able to go about. I trust that you will be able to give a better report upon both cases to-morrow. Mr. Cartwright is a fine young man and we need all such."

The physician bowed as he turned away.

"'Whom the gods love,' but after all there is other cause if the good—or bad—die young, Mrs. Millard," he said. "We will save all such if we can, be sure."

"But rather come death to them all," he finished to himself as he rode away from the door, "than to look as their daughter does this morning in her young beauty with the fire of liquor in her blood."

But the days wore on, and for a week there was no sign of improvement, scarcely change in any way for Millard's daughter, save it were a little less of that feverish stupor, though still there was stupor, and still her lips and cheeks were red with the dull red from unnatural causes.

The physician frowned and felt that his orders were not obeyed; yet, still very smoothly and positively, the mother and the nurse affirmed that the patient had the brandy only as he prescribed. The broken arm was doing well; all other injuries had been decided upon and were carefully treated; and still the pretty eyes were always heavy and the pretty face flushed and vacant when the doctor made his daily call.

Very trying this was to him, for, believing in the moderate use of liquor for medicinal purposes, yet, feeling that this helpless girl on the threshold of womanhood was forced to lie for hours under its influence without her own knowledge, he wished from the bottom of his heart that there had never come into the world such evil. For Dr. Farjeon, though a worldly man, was a man of heart and conscience.

"If she is to live with this habit formed for her during her own irresponsibility, and formed for her by her mother, I prefer seeing her waste away daily before our eyes. What bitter, bitter fruition it would be for her father. No better man than Harry Millard is in the world to-day."

And indeed death were better, her father groaned inwardly when first he was admitted into the sick-room, and realized that the pretty,

stupid face upon the pillows was the face of his daughter, vacant of true womanly consciousness from the influence of the liquor which he sold.

"The heavens be merciful to her!" he murmured, pacing his room for hours afterward, recalling over and over the scene where his daughter—his daughter—lay on the white pillows with her pretty eyes half closed, not recognizing him, and the soft, flushed cheeks, and lips apart in vacant half smiling. "May the Lord remember her innocence and that my sin—if it is sin—is my own, not hers, not to be punished through her!"

His sorrow was terrible. Had the future lifted its curtain for him to catch a glimpse of what lay ahead—a yawning gulf at his daughter's feet,—his daughter, who should not be punished for his sin?

"They tell us that God is good!" he groaned, pacing back and forth. "He cannot be good, He cannot be kind or merciful should He allow her to suffer for me! I have done no intentional wrong to any man. I open my purse to all who are in need. Is this my sin?"

CHAPTER VI.

IN THE FIELDS.

"Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun."—*Bible.*

"DICK!" said Anne softly.

It was Sunday afternoon, and these two were sitting together at one of the windows talking over the morning's lesson between short readings from the boy's library book. Barclay went out immediately after the plain little dinner, with the unquestioned assurance that he would not return until night, and Anne and Dick—for Dick spent always a part of his Sunday afternoons with Anne—were alone. This was their only day of rest and quiet.

"Dick!" said Anne.

"Yes, Anne," replied Dick with grave attention. He knew from her tone that it was not of the lesson nor of the book she would speak.

"You know that Miss Millard is very sick, laddie, and she has been kind to us. I have heard that one can find such flowers as Mr.

Dean gave you, away out on the road beyond the Park. It is so very little we can do to show how sorry we are that Miss Millard is sick, that perhaps she would be pleased even if we could do no more than go out there and gather some of these flowers for her. She knows that we have no flowers and cannot afford to buy from the hothouses, and she would appreciate our desire to do something for her, I am sure. It is good to be remembered, Dick, when one is sick."

"Yes," said Dick thoughtfully. He knew that it was heavenly good for him to have Anne to come to when he had the deadly pain in his back, and there was no one else to whom he could tell his suffering save her and God! "But you could never walk all that way, Anne! It is a long, long, long way! Marm took me out there once in the cars, and it was a good bit of riding. You never could walk there! It wouldn't hurt me to walk twice as far," hurried on the little fellow, fearing lest she should think that it was of himself he thought, "but you couldn't, you know. I'll tell Miss Millard that you wanted to, and she'll understand; or I'll ask Mr. Dean to get 'em for you. I know that he would."

Anne shook her head, smiling.

"It will not hurt me, Dick," she said, and there was a fine light upon her face that made her very beautiful in the boy's eyes. "I shall like to go. We so seldom have the opportunity to do even that little for any one that it will do us both good. It will not be wicked to go if it is Sunday," she added, seeing the boy's hesitation, "for we are told by the Good Book, Dick, to do good on the Sabbath day, and it is surely well to remember the sick. If we get tired we can take a car. I think that I can afford to spend a few pennies for that."

"But Mr. Dean would get 'em for you and we could take 'em to her jest the same," still argued Dick with his eager eyes upon her lighted face. For Dick was longing to go. "I don't mind askin' him, Anne. I know he would do it!"

"I have no doubt of that," said Anne in her steady, sweet voice, "but I prefer getting them ourselves, Dick. It will do us both good; you have not been out lately, and the air will give you rosy cheeks and eyes all ready for a good night's sleep when we come home. Come, Dick. Father will not return until late and we shall have plenty of time."

So Dick, finding it useless to argue and really longing to go, only nodded his acquiescence and waited for her to dress for their walk.

The day was beautiful but cold, with late autumn winds whirling down the streets and up from the alleys, blowing Anne's dress wildly about her and beating warm rose in her pale thin cheeks, and new light in her dark eyes, while Dick, hurrying beside her with his little crooked back, and grave face upraised, felt new blood along his veins in the wild weather.

They chatted as they walked, Dick asking innumerable questions and Anne answering them as well as she knew, many passers-by turning to look after them, wondering who they were—the girl with the sweet, thin face, and the boy with eloquent eyes—while others, knowing, stopped to speak to them, giving them good-day and good wishes for their walk.

It was a long walk. Had the wind been less brisk or invigorating they would have been exceedingly fatigued. As it was they went but slowly, pausing often to rest, and talking of what was pleasant to lessen the distance. One house which they passed pleased Anne especially, and she told her pleasure to her companion. It was a small, two-story house, with

a piazza surrounding it and tiny bay-windows and an upper balcony, and vines now stripped of leaves and brown, reaching up and up even to the chimneys and swaying in the strong winds. There was not much ground around it; just a square of lawn, level and clean, and a small garden at the back, with trees enough for shade and sunlight; open spaces for health.

"A pretty house," said Anne, her eyes brightening. "There are handsome houses all along, Dick, but this suits me better than any of them! We shall model ours after it when we get our fortunes, wont we, laddie?"

Dick nodded gravely with a long, searching look up into her animated face. He was clinging fast to her hand as they walked along and they were a strange pair.

"And didn't you know?" he queried in his thin, piping voice, very gravely. "Didn't Mr. Dean ever tell you, Anne? He lives here—he, and his marm and sister! It's their own house that they've lived in forever and ever! He said so. He told me—I should 'a' thought he'd 'a' told you! Ain't it a lovely place? It must be beautiful to live here. If only he didn't do what he does——"

Anne interrupted him with no apparent haste.

"It is a pretty place, Dick. When we grow rich, you know," her smile was bright and touched her face wonderfully, "we are to have one just like it! Father would be very happy here, wouldn't he?"

"And you," said Dick with quiet positiveness, though he was not so certain that she could be happy anywhere so long as her father lived his reckless life. He would not have her know that this thought was in his mind and his voice betrayed no doubt.

So they walked on in silence for a few minutes, and after a long, long time they passed the Park and came out into the open fields where the goldenrod should be.

But Anne knew nothing of flowers save that they were sweet and good to see and have about one; but her life left no time for their cultivation had she been at liberty to spend her money for them; and it was late for any flowers, even the hardiest! They were woefully disappointed. This ending to their walk they had not considered. Mr. Dean had sent Anne flowers gathered there a week or so before, and that there should be none now would have seemed absurd to them if they had been told, and had not seen the bare brown fields themselves with

only faded yellowish white puffs drifting by from the stalks, where the royal golden plumes had waved so gallantly!

In the first moment of their disappointment tears sprang to Anne's eyes as she stood on the border of the fields with Dick's hand close clasped in hers, vainly searching for the flowers they would have carried to their friend. Then Anne turned aside and found a large rock where they could sit and rest, sheltered from the cold wind before starting upon their way home.

Rather a dreary scene with the wind in the long dead grasses and tumbling the vines struggling for their hold to the walls. Nevertheless, Anne with her appreciative eyes caught the beauty of even that wild scene with the mad wind and scurrying leaves and down-driven grasses. The sky was blue and the lower stretch of field and wood—was it not most effective in dull browns and white?

They were shielded from observation from passers on the street, and the few who crossed beside the fields if they turned to look after them, whispered softly of the girl's frail beauty and the lad's so strangely aged face!

By and by, after a long silence filled with

thought, Anne stirred with a faint sigh and turned to her companion.

"Come, Dick," she said, and smiled, looking down upon him; "it is chilly here; we must go. I fear you will take cold. And then," just the faintest perceptible pause and the lowest change of voice, "father will come home and find me gone unless we do make haste!"

"I'm ready," answered Dick cheerily, knowing how sad her face had been a few moments before, meeting her smile with as bright a one. "I'm real strong, Anne, and I won't take cold nor get tired; but you ain't strong, you know. And," the same strange hesitation on his part in uttering the words, "as you say, your father will come home maybe and be mad if you ain't there! But ain't it been nice—comin' here, Anne?"

"Beautiful," replied Anne absently, as she rose with downcast eyes and held out her hand to Dick.

But Dick had turned with a flush of half pleasure, half resentment upon his grave face, and drew himself as erect as his poor deformed back would allow, swift pride for Anne in his steady eyes as a lady and gentleman came near.

"Oh," he said slowly, looking from the new-

comers to Anne, "is it you, Mr. Dean? Have you come for flowers? We've been lookin' for 'em—Anne an' me—and they're all dead!"

"I hope we haven't disturbed you!" said Mr. Dean courteously, presenting his sister, a bright-eyed, pretty young girl whose soft brown hair was blowing in tiny rings upon her forehead under the pretty hat. There were deep dimples at the corners of her mouth, too, that made one, watching her, involuntarily smile; and so it was that Anne, giving her one slim, gloved hand, smiled back into this charming face and told herself it was good to have for a sister such a girl as this!

"I am sure that you are going home," said Miss Dean mischievously, as she drew Anne's hand under her arm as though she were an old and well-loved friend. "Jim and I saw you from the other end of the field, and came down in a dreadful hurry to meet you before you could go away, because," she patted lightly the hand upon her arm, "I have so long wanted to know you, Miss Barclay. Jim tells mamma and me about those he knows, and of course he has spoken of you and Dick. Dick, you see, is friends right away with Jim! Everybody is. I'm proud of my brother, Miss Barclay; he's so good to mamma and me! Aren't you sorry you

haven't a nice brother to go to when things run crooked sometimes? Jim is my chum, you know; I tell him all my little confidences, and in return he tells me about his friends, and lets me meet them if I am very, very good. So, of course he told me about you and Dick. I shall like Dick. I like you. I want you to come and see us the very first time you can. We have the tiniest mite of a house, but we have a good time in it! I was born there, Miss Barclay! Of course I couldn't care so much for any other home as that! And if you will, I want you to go in when we get down there and meet mamma. You'll like her, too. I hope you will like me, but I know you'll like mamma. You simply could not help it! Jim and I do!"

She laughed the softest, merriest ripple of laughter, and Anne could not resist joining in it. In fact, Anne felt that she was not quite Anne Barclay, but some other, happier creature in this girl's presence!

"And you came away out here for flowers and found none!" continued Miss Dean in her pretty voice as she walked on ahead of Jim Dean and Dick. "Never mind, Miss Barclay; we have a mite of a conservatory, and when we stop at home you shall have your own choice of

flowers, if we haven't such an immense variety! They are almost as good as the wild flowers, and, anyway, you can make them do!"

"You are so kind," said Anne softly. This girl was so unlike Miss Millard; so bright and wholesome and true. Miss Millard was always kind to Anne, but she let her know that her position was far beneath her own. Miss Dean did not. To be sure she was not above the middle class, but it was a sweet, spontaneous courtesy that proved the nobility of character and her claim to the title of proud womanhood.

"And here comes our car," here interrupted Mr. Dean, joining them with Dick in eager friendship.

So it was that in the most matter-of-fact manner Anne Barclay and Dick entered the charming little home that they so admired a couple of hours before, and were welcomed as warmly, if less enthusiastically, as the daughter could desire. And when they left a half-hour later,—for Anne would not be persuaded to stay to tea, urging as her excuse her need to be at home upon her father's return,—they carried with them a bouquet of fragrant house-flowers for Miss Millard and also fragrant memories of those new friends so strangely set in their lives.

As they entered the gateway to Mr. Millard's handsome estate Dick held his breath with admiration, his quick eyes noting the beauties as swiftly as Anne's.

"Oh," he murmured in an undertone, "ain't this grand, Anne! Ain't it beautiful! But, after all," a sigh and a wistful upward glance into her face, "I think I like Mr. Dean's best! It's more homelike, you know! I shouldn't dare more'n breathe here, but there it's as though they jest made the house to laugh in! And I can't b'lieve," his lips grew very determined and he shook his head stoutly, "that Mr. Dean is truly bad! He jest couldn't be, Anne, living there!"

Anne smiled.

"One is one's self wherever one is, Dick," she said, but he did not lose the touch of wistfulness in her own voice, and it strengthened his belief in his new friend. "We will go to the side entrance. That is the way I come when I bring work and it is easier, too."

But Dick murmured to himself with a boy's persistence that they wouldn't have let them go to any side door at Mr. Dean's! But he only whispered it to himself and Anne did not know.

The girl who answered Anne's ring knew her

well from her frequent calls to take and deliver work, and as she liked her she spoke pleasantly.

"Come in, Anne," she said. "You and your brother."

Anne shook her head.

"We cannot," she answered gently. "Dick and I only came to leave these flowers for Miss Millard. We are so sorry she is ill. We wished her to know that we are sorry and so we brought these."

"Aren't they beautiful!" said the girl, taking them and inhaling their fragrance. "I didn't know that you had such a garden, Anne!"

"Those came from a friend," explained Anne, smiling. "We have no flowers, Amy. How is Miss Millard?"

"She is about the same," answered Amy, a shadow upon her good-humored face. "I wish you'd come in just for a minute—you and the boy—and I'll get you a cup of tea to warm you. It's cold to-day."

But Anne was resolute in refusing this friendly offer. It was late and she must return before her father came home.

She and Dick were turning away down the curved walk when a pleasant voice called her. Amy had come to the door breathlessly and

was calling them back. Mr. Millard, from the library, had seen them come and go, and summoning Amy he learned that this was Barclay's daughter and desired to speak with her. He knew enough of her father to feel that this might be a case where a friend's helping hand might be needed. And if there were anything in his power to do to divert the punishment from his daughter——

So he smiled gravely but very kindly upon Anne and her little friend as they entered the room, motioning them to be seated.

"You are Barclay's daughter?" he asked of Anne as she lifted her sweet, shy eyes to his kind face. "Be seated, child. Are you her brother, my lad?"

"No, sir," Dick said shyly. "Anne's his daughter; Anne's my friend too. I'm only Dick Chester, the cripple, you know."

Mr. Millard smiled. The boy interested him. Anne interested him too, but there was not such possibilities for his being of lasting benefit to her as to the small lad.

"And your father, Miss Barclay. Would you like—do you think that he would like a—position of any sort?" He faltered uneasily before the girl's calm face. He scarcely knew how to

frame his speech not to wound her. "I am quite sure that I could procure him a lucrative position at once if he desires."

There was no change in Anne's face save a trifle more pallor. Her eyes met his quietly. She would not be seated, for she could not linger.

"I thank you, Mr. Millard," she said sweetly. "My father is not well or strong and has not been able to work for a long time, but I will speak to him about this, and let you know. If he were well and strong I should be glad—he would be glad! But you will excuse me now, I am sure, when I tell you that I must go home or father will return and not know where I am."

The gravity deepened upon Mr. Millard's face. She was surely not well or strong either, and yet did he not hear from his wife and daughter that she sewed for a living—hers and her father's? Could this be Barclay's daughter, this sweet, calm woman who would not keep her father waiting?

"I shall be glad to do anything that is in my power, Miss Barclay," he said courteously. He could not have treated her with more respect had she been his equal socially. "Kindly let me know if I may. And how is it with Dick?

Is there anything that I can do for you, my boy?"

Dick was as proud as Anne with this man who ruined men's souls unintentionally but just as surely! He drew himself up with pathetic dignity, his great grave eyes meeting the grave eyes opposite.

"No, sir; thank you, sir," he said. "I have work to do. Just a little, but it helps marm. Marm works too, you know, an' when I get big I can take all the care of her. She sha'n't work when I am a man—marm sha'n't!"

And Millard sighed, thinking—was the boy's soul higher than his own with all his endeavor to be upright and clear of sin? Had he mistaken, after all, the true meaning of an upright, honorable life, and sown but bitterest seeds of wrong where he had argued a harvest of good?

For a few moments he looked at the boy in silence. His eyes were very grave and a touch of sadness was around his mouth. Were these the children of drunkards, this sweet-faced, slender girl, and the valiant little cripple, protesting his guardianship of his mother when he should grow to be a man? If so, then indeed the curse of drink was far heavier than he knew; far more sinful and degrading!

He was aware that many drunkards sank low, that many lost all pride and manhood and self-respect; but that the curse descended also to such children as Barclay's daughter and this Dick Chester, proved that there was more than personal shame or punishment to follow intemperance.

Still, and the marvel of it never touched his consciousness, it did not once occur to him that he was in any sense responsible for this.

The fact that Anne was still standing impressed itself upon him presently, and for the moment he set thought aside to dismiss them.

"I most sincerely regret that it is out of my power to assist you in any way," he said gently. "If at any time I can do so, you will come unhesitatingly to me? You do not know what pleasure it is for me, I am sure, or you would not so positively refuse to-day. Remember that my daughter always fancied you, Miss Barclay, and that her father would do anything in his power to increase your happiness on that account if for no other! And as for Dick," he smiled at the boy, who was now standing rather proudly beside Anne, "if there should come a time when he needs a friend in caring for his mother, come to me. I shall be glad to have you come.

"And now," he rose instinctively as they

turned toward the door, "thanking you for your kind remembrance of my daughter, I will not longer detain you. Good-bye, Miss Barclay. Let me know your father's decision. Good-bye, Dick, my lad. I am glad that you came!"

As the door closed behind them he seated himself with a sigh and leaned back, thinking of them and of his own daughter and her life to come, comparing them with a restless half-consciousness that there was something wrong when such a girl-woman and such a brave boy were placed as they were, defenceless save for their own soul-honor and undaunted hearts; half conscious that this something wrong was connected with himself, and might peril his own daughter; yet that he himself was blameless!

"I regret that I called them back!" he said half audibly, turning impatiently in his chair and changing one leg over the other, a frown growing between his brows. "Could I have helped them in any way I should have had that consciousness to balance this uneasiness of mind. As it is, I wish that I had let them go. What is old Barclay to me more than any other man pretty well down in the social scale because of his own actions? I offered assistance to his daughter and this boy, and if they refused, is it

my fault? I have done all that I can. No one can do more. I shall not bother about them."

He resolutely pushed the thought aside, and settled himself to reading or sleeping, as the mood might come; but Anne's sweet, pale face and gentle pride, together with the boy's quaint dignity, recurred again and again to him, blurring the page or marring sleep, and he felt that some sin of his were being punished through some one innocent of wrong!

Unpleasant thoughts; but pleasant thought would not come, and he sat there helplessly until his wife entered the room to tell him what news there was of their daughter's health.

And as the days wore on good-cheer returned to the hearts of the watchers at the bedside of Millard's daughter, for slowly but certainly improvement came and the pretty eyes opened, recognizingly, upon those about her. Strength was longer in coming, but even that came after many days of watching and patient waiting.

Young Cartwright regained his accustomed health and spirits much sooner than Minnie Millard. His injuries, as the physician stated, were severe but not serious, and his thoughtful attentions to his pretty finacée were beyond question. Flowers and fruit and every dainty

fancy that was likely to please her, his thoughtfulness provided. Every day, sometimes twice a day, he called to inquire as to her condition; and when she was able to receive and read his letters he sent her notes filled with pretty words of love, and anxiety for her swift recovery.

"He will make an irreproachable husband," said Mrs. Millard to her husband, as they discussed the matter one night in the safety of their own room. "Minnie should be a very happy girl. The attentions that Mr. Cartwright showers upon her would spoil many girls. Minnie appreciates this too. If she did not she would be most ungrateful! But I was certain that she would accept him when he should ask her hand in marriage, for our Minnie is more common-sensed than most girls of her age."

"You could not ask for a more straightforward fellow than Cartwright when he came to me about our daughter," her husband added after a pause, his eyes upon the glowing grate. "I have always liked him, but he pleased me more then than at any time. I am perfectly satisfied to have Minnie's happiness rest in his hands."

And as for Minnie Millard, she felt that she should be accounted very happy, and as the

days crawled lazily and easily by, she congratulated herself that life was such a good thing after all, and health so desirable.

"I don't see why people should wish themselves dead—ever!" she soliloquized one day, lying idly among her cushions, her slim fingers toying with the blood-red petals of a rose she held. "I am sure it is nice to live. I want to live. I never want to die!"

Then she laughed softly, lifting the rose to her cheek, her gaze straying from the draperied window through the bare tree-boughs to the blue of the heavens, as she thought of her life and happiness.

"It was kind in Anne," she said to herself as old memories returned, "to bring me flowers when I was so ill; but I wish that she had not done it! I do not know why it is, I cannot account for it myself, but it makes me unhappy to think of her in her poor little home with her cruel father! If my father were like hers how I should hate him,—how glad I should be when he were away, and how impossible it would be for me to be to him what Anne is to her father! I wish that I needn't think of her—now!"

"You are to think of nothing," said her mother with unusual tenderness, softly entering

the room and overhearing her,—"but pleasant things, Minnie. I have brought you a little wine. You are excited and it will quiet you and make you sleep your bright eyes back!"

And recollection of Anne was gone!

CHAPTER VII.

A PLEASANT VISITOR.

"Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood."
—*Lady Clara Vere de Vere.*

THERE had been a scene between Anne and her father, for Anne kept her word to Mr. Millard, and told her father what was offered him if he chose to accept. But John Barclay, never fond of work even in his best days, was still less so inclined as the years shortened for him, and he was intensely indignant that any one should suggest such a possibility to him when there was his daughter to support him and who should be made to do so.

Anne knew that such a scene must come if she kept her promise to Mr. Millard; but Anne never broke her promises. She had tact, however, and did not speak until her father was sober. This was seldom, and she was forced to wait; but finally the opportunity came and she spoke.

A heavy frown gathered upon his forehead at her first word. He spread out his hands,

trembling from his reckless life, in a hopelessly pathetic fashion.

"Yes!" he said angrily, with an oath. "It's like the cheek of some folks! Refusin' a decent man a drink that he hasn't no idea of not payin' for, and yet sellin' liquor, and sellin' it as he chooses, as though he owned the world and the folks in it! Work for him? Well! I think I ain't agoing to work for him! It's enough to know that my girl works for his wife without my doing it! You can tell him for me that John Barclay ain't come to that yet. What he may do he don't know, excepting that he'll never come to that! And how a girl of mine could for a minute believe such a thing is a marvel! If you'd kept yourself to home where you should have been, there wouldn't be need of my being insulted—partic'ly by that man! But you always was a fool and always will be, I suppose!"

"Mr. Millard was very kind," remonstrated Anne with quiet authority. "He certainly meant no harm and no insult to you, father. Had he talked to you, you would have been assured of this too."

"Had he talked to me!" reiterated her father still more wrathfully, his hands clenched as

though indeed he would avenge this insult to his independence. "He wouldn't have talked much of this to me, let me tell you, Anne Barclay, 'thout my telling him plain and open what I thought of him for his impudence! Talked to me indeed! He'd never have dared talk to me about that more'n a word or two. But you never did have the pride of a fly! You'd let any one insult you and your father 'thout opening your mouth to resent it. I never did see such a girl!"

"I am sorry," said Anne with quiet gentleness, "if I did wrong, father. Miss Millard has been very kind to me, and Mr. Millard spoke kindly certainly. I wished him to know that we appreciated his desire to help us."

"But we don't need help from such as him!" protested her father, his bloodshot eyes touched with indignant fire. "A proud, overbearing, stuck-up, make-believe pious man as would take a man's last cent if 'twasn't for what the world would say! It would have served him right if his daughter had a-been killed in the runaway, he's so set on her—thinks she's the most wonderful creature there ever was and all that, when I guess I've got a daughter as well as him!"

He did not say this from pride or affection for his daughter, but in defence of his own pride against this other man. Anne knew this as well as he, but she had learned wisdom from her life. Many words seldom mend a hurt.

"And I won't have it!" added her father violently after a moment, as he caught up his hat and prepared to go out. "You've got to quit being such friends with them Millards, Anne Barclay! There was that Jim Dean that you was friendly with till I told you I wouldn't have it. He's another of them makeshift fellers who put on a powerful sight of airs thinkin' he's better than most folks when he ain't nothing but a bartender! I stopped that and I'll stop this. There'll be no fooling with me or mine, if I know it!"

Anne made no reply. She would venture no word until she was certain that what she should say would be advisable. Argument with her father led always to worse. Anne Barclay was wise in her way.

"You can sew for them Millards when they've got it to do, but I'll have no foolin' nor familiarity or patronage from them," he added, pausing in the doorway to make more emphatic his desire. "I may as well put a stop to it now, and you may as well know it!"

And closing the door heavily behind him he was gone, his footsteps shuffling upon the stairs until the sound died in the closing of the outer door, and Anne was alone.

She seated herself at her sewing after clearing the room and tidying everything about it. There was a touch of sadness about her face that deepened its pallor, but the dark eyes were brave and steady. Miss Millard had been kind to her—thoughtful of her. She could not bear to give up her friendship. So far as she could see that it was right, she obeyed her father; this did not seem right for her to do. If they gave her work and so assisted her to live, was she to return their kindness by unresponsive words and acts? She obeyed him regarding Mr. Dean, for Mr. Dean was merely one of those who uttered kindly words when there was need, and showed unobtrusive little attentions that his thoughtfulness prompted.

She pondered upon this as she sewed until the quiet thought came to her to fret about nothing that she could not mend, and to wait with patience until the moment called for decision before she decided; no one is certain of how changes come to set aside all one's fine plans; and presently she began to sing very low and softly

a comforting verse or two, her fingers working busily and tirelessly at her sewing.

As she sat so, there came a tap upon the door, and at her soft summons to "come in," a small, slender, pleasant-faced girl opened the door hesitatingly and entered. Anne laid aside her sewing and arose at once. A faint tinge of color crept to her cheeks and a new, shy dignity made her welcome irresistible. She extended her hand, smiling.

"This is very kind, Miss Dean," she said softly, her dark eyes shining. "I thought perhaps you would forget to come, or that you might have so many friends——"

Nellie Dean interrupted her and set aside any awkwardness that there might be upon their meeting. She too smiled as she said with delightful frankness:

"I could not forget you, Miss Barclay, once meeting you. Mamma wished me to come when I asked if I might, and tell you that we should be so glad if you will come to us next Sunday afternoon and drink tea in our old-fashioned parlor! Mamma is fond of her parlor—and tea—and you, Miss Barclay!"

"I scarcely know what to answer, Miss Dean," Anne said softly. "It is pleasant—perhaps you

do not know how pleasant—to be so remembered; but I never go away for long, because father needs me at home when he comes. I do not like to disappoint father."

"Why not bring your father too?" suggested Miss Dean hesitatingly. "I am sure that my brother would be glad to have him come, and then there would be no reason for you to remain at home, Miss Barclay."

A slow, strange, deep flush rose to Anne's face. Miss Dean saw this and her own face deepened in color.

"Again I thank you," said Anne gently. Her heart was deeply touched by this kindness and sympathy. "But I fear that I shall still have to answer that it is impossible, Miss Dean. Please do not think," she added hastily, lest she had wounded her new friend, "that we do not appreciate your invitation! It truly is not that. Father will be pleased as well as I when I tell him; but father never goes out—that way—on Sundays. Your brother knows—I am sure that he knows—why!"

Then, from the expression of Miss Dean's face, remembering that this might seem disloyal toward her father, she checked herself with a deprecating gesture.

"He has friends," she explained swiftly, "that of course he could not bring home. We have such a little home, you see, Miss Dean! And then men are not like women in these things."

"I know," said Miss Dean sweetly and brightly as though there could be nothing but the most ordinary commonplace behind Anne's explanation. "I tell mamma that men are dreadful creatures sometimes, Miss Barclay. Of course mamma laughs at me and asks what do I know about them save that I have a kind brother—for I have the very nicest of brothers, Miss Barclay!"

Miss Barclay smiled. Her thoughts returned to the day when she promised her father to have nothing to do with this bright girl's brother!

"And do you know, Miss Barclay," the flush deepened in the smooth cheeks, a touch of dew in the dark eyes, "that my brother has such an excellent position in Hart & Hart's? That's the big dry-goods house down-town. He left Mr. Millard's some time ago, and a friend sent him to this house. Mamma and I are so glad because—because——"

No need to tell the reason. Perhaps the heart of each girl had ached many times, and

there could be no doubt that Barclay's daughter understood perfectly the other's meaning.

"And I am glad for you, Miss Dean," Anne said simply. "Very glad."

"But are you certain that you cannot come to us on Sunday—you and your father?" asked Miss Dean with a wistful light in her eyes and a pleading smile around the fresh young mouth. "We should be so glad to have you come, Miss Barclay!"

But Anne was positive in spite of the desire in her heart to go and be like other girls of her age and have pleasant friends; and so after a few moments' longer chat upon indifferent subjects, Miss Dean went away, carrying with her a memory of sweet patience and pleasure in well-doing that affected always her own after-life.

"And with such a father!" she murmured to herself, walking briskly through the crisp, cold air, waking roses to life in her cheeks and a dawning half smile on her lips. Her own life was happy; almost without care save for this one bitter knowledge of her brother's business that was now removed. Her father was a most kind, generous man both in his family and among his friends. From experience she could not know just how much Anne suffered or how

truly noble she was; but her warm heart responded to any suffering she saw, and she knew instinctively that Anne suffered intensely because of her father's life. For her brother had told them how Anne lived and worked for her father.

"Anne Barclay," she added vehemently under her breath, gathering her furs closer about her as the cold wind swept the street, her bright face very attractive peeping above the long fur of her coat. "Anne Barclay, what wouldn't I give to be more like you in character! Poor little insignificant me! What am I beside you? But even so, you shall have a friend in me if you will accept me!"

But Anne went back to her sewing rather sadly, knowing nothing of this warm regard of Jim Dean's sister. She had many friends, so far as they were her well-wishers and would do anything for her, but few came to her as Miss Dean came; and as Nellie Dean left her, she realized in a new and intense degree what it was to be closed in the home life, and away from others who would make life better and broader because of companionship and sympathy.

She was very silent over her sewing for a long time, thinking, and her thoughts were growing

selfish and hard, as did not often happen with Anne Barclay, when she caught the sound of Dick's halting footstep on the stairs, and the color flushed her face when she comprehended what her thoughts had been and how disloyal she had been to her father.

"I shall tell Dick how bad I have been," she said to herself as she waited his tap upon the door. "He has too exalted an opinion of me and must know that I am not by any means so perfect as he thinks."

Then she called a bright "come in" and the door swung open to admit Dick's bent little figure and pale face; the large dark eyes turned immediately to her, certain of finding her at her accustomed seat with her sewing. But to-day the pale face did not brighten nor the dark eyes smile upon her as usually they did. Instead, there was a drawn look about both that startled Anne. She reached out her hand with a brave, bright smile. She knew from his face that he was suffering bodily or mentally.

"I was waiting for you, Dick lad," she said. "Here is your chair also waiting beside me."

He took little heed of her words. He did not offer to cross the floor to her, but stood just within the doorway, silent, unable to speak.

Then with a swift catching of his breath and a pathetic gesture of despair and entreaty, he said in his thin, high voice :

"Anne ! I have come for you. Marm is very sick. She says she's only took cold, but she can't more'n whisper, an' I'm so 'fraid for her She looks jest dreadful, Anne ! White, an' a pain in her side an' breathin' so hard ! I want to go for a doctor an' she says no, that she'll be all right presently. What'll I do, Anne ? You know. I came for you !"

Anne laid aside her sewing. She had seen considerable of sickness and feared that she knew what was the cause of her friend's illness. She rose and prepared to go with Dick, her hands trembling with haste.

"I will go with you at once, Dick dear," she said gently. "If she needs a doctor we will send for one ourselves !"

CHAPTER VIII.

NEIGHBORLY MINISTRATION.

"In man's most dark extremity
Oft succor dawns from Heaven."
—*The Lord of the Isle.*

DICK CHESTER and his mother lived two doors below on the same street with Anne Barclay. They rented only two small rooms facing the south, and these rooms, like Anne's, were the perfection of neatness. Winter was setting in, and the sunlight streaming through the two small windows made the little home bright with warmth and light.

Eleanor Chester and Anne Barclay were friends; the sort of friends that the struggle for life drifts the one into the other to flow ruggedly on together. Days might pass between their meeting, but always each felt perfect reliance upon the other's friendship if sore need came. Both families had lived on that street, and in close proximity for several years—ever since Dick's father died and left his widow with the

baby lad to care for—and first Anne was attracted by the child's grave face and large, pathetic eyes, and smiled up to him at the window as she passed. Then she met him with his pretty young mother upon the street, and the child held out his arms to her and smiled back into her gentle, sympathetic face. So the two struggling women met and spoke with the child as mediator, and by and by were friends.

In consequence of this warm friendship Anne hastened to go with Dick when he announced his mother's illness. She knew that Eleanor Chester, with her brave determination to care for her boy, would not yield to slight illness. If she had frightened Dick in this manner she must be very ill and haste was necessary.

"If it is just a severe cold," she said to Dick as they hurried down the stairs and out into the windy street, "I can probably make her comfortable; but if it is more than that, I shall send you for Dr. Benton at once. Your mother doesn't care enough for herself, Dick dear; she needs us to watch over her."

She smiled brightly as she said this, for the boy's pale face was drawn with anxiety and Anne's heart was always pitiful.

But Dick was not to be comforted.

"Marm's dre'dful sick, Anne!" was all he replied in a dead sort of certainty. "'Tain't jest a cold. You can't help her. You can do most things, but not that, Anne, 'cause I feel 't you can't!"

And Anne found that this was true when she arrived in the sick-room and found her friend burning with fever and sitting up in bed half delirious from the pain in her side of which she complained, and because of which she was unable to rest or lie down, as Anne tried to persuade her to do. So Anne wrote a hasty note to the physician and sent Dick immediately to carry it; for Dick had waited beside her helplessly, yet with dumb fear, during the few words that passed between his mother and Anne; and with trembling feet and close-shut lips the boy hurried away upon his errand as noiselessly as possible with his heavy shoes down the bare stairs.

Dr. Benton was a young physician, but rapidly growing in practice and popularity, and Anne had heard of him through her neighbors as being not only skillful but kind-hearted and conscientious; as attentive in a case where there was little or no payment as among the more wealthy. He lived on one of the broad streets

off from the side street where Anne lived, and his house was neat and prosperous in appearance, denoting a well-to-do man.

Dick felt no hesitation as he climbed the steps and rang the bell. When he and Anne went to leave the flowers for Miss Millard he felt hushed and insignificant by the beauty about him; here all was very nice but different.

The physician came out immediately when the girl who answered his summons announced his errand. He was a genial-faced young man, and his kindly eyes smiled upon Dick as he saw him standing near the door in the hall, one hand grasping his hat as though that gave him strength, his pale face lifted with quaint dignity that won the man's respect at once.

"So the mother is ill," he said, and his voice was pleasant and interested; "I will go with you directly, my lad; we'll not bother about the carriage."

He had his case with him as though he were just about to leave the house, and taking up his hat as he spoke they went out together. Dick was anxious and only too glad to hurry beside him down the street; the young doctor tall, broad-shouldered, prosperous-looking; the lad so sadly deformed yet with the brave soul of a

man within him that forbade his lowering one inch of his dignity even knowing so well as he did what a contrast they made. Then, too, there was his anxiety about his mother, and before that what was his pride?

Eleanor Chester was very ill. The physician's face carried this news without words to the two anxious watchers as he turned aside to prepare the medicine after careful examination. Her temperature was fearfully high; he would not tell these volunteer nurses how high this was; and her pulse was like trip-hammers in the slim wrist. She was overworked and exhausted and had little to fall back upon in the way of strength to fight the fever and pain. Pneumonia was difficult in most cases; in this it was almost hopeless from the first, but the physician remained beside her for a long time, doing all in his power to make her comfortable.

"She needs constant care," he said to Anne quietly, regarding her with some curiosity as she moved like a calm spirit about the room. "Are you her sister?"

"No," Anne replied, a half smile touching her lips, her beautiful, calm eyes upon his. "We are only neighbors, doctor."

"A kind neighbor," he said. Then, fearing

that he might have wounded her as speaking too personally, he added gently,—"Is the boy all whom she has to care for her, Miss—I—beg your pardon."

"I am Anne Barclay," answered Anne with quiet, undisturbed dignity. "All that a neighbor can do I shall be glad to do for Mrs. Chester. I have only my father to care for at home. I can care for him and for her too,—Dick and I!"

The boy was sitting motionless at the foot of the bed, save the busy fingers among the bright bits of paper, working noiselessly lest he disturb his mother, yet knowing that he must not be idle; the great grave eyes lifted every moment from his work to the flushed face on the piled-up pillows. He heard this conversation, but his mind was in a tumult of fear and anxiety. When Anne uttered his name he nodded, with a firm compression of his lips, looking across at them, and resumed his work.

The physician smiled back at the boy. A grave, kind smile, half as though he pitied him, Dick thought resentfully, in his sensitiveness regarding this illness of his mother. His mother was not so sick as that he needed to be pitied by any one. She couldn't be so sick as that—he couldn't have it so! And yet——

He lifted his grave, searching eyes to the flushed, thin face upon the pillows, the half-closed eyes vacant of recognition, and caught his breath fearing that he faced the truth! And the truth might be more than even his brave heart could bear! He had always comforted himself when his mother worked especially hard, that some day he should care for her when he grew to be a man; and now——

"I think that Mrs. Chester is as comfortable as possible," said Dr. Benton as he rose to go. "I will come in again to-day. I leave her in good hands now, I know, Miss Barclay."

He knew that she would make an excellent nurse and the patient needed such.

"I shall do all that I can, doctor," Anne said. She read in his face more than even she cared to hear from his lips. "And Dick is a capital nurse, I assure you."

The doctor nodded, smiling, but his eyes wandered to the bed where the patient lay breathing shortly and with difficulty, but in a half consciousness that enforced silence upon her lips. Very thin and wan that flushed, unconscious face! No strength to fight for life; no consciousness of life!

"Both reliable nurses!" he said, answering

Anne's remark, as he paused in the doorway. "I shall run in before night, Miss Barclay."

"And I hope," said Anne softly, thinking of Dick, "that you will find her better, doctor!"

"Yes," he said gently, with sudden pity for the girl too in her sad, narrow life. "I hope so, Miss Barclay."

But Anne knew from his face that he had little belief in this hope!

When he was gone a terrible stillness seemed to take possession of the room; the difficult breathing of the patient was the only audible sound that made itself heard by the watchers. The sounds in the streets someway died ere they reached the darkened windows. The outer room was sunny, but the light was shaded in the sick-room.

At Anne's request Dick went over for her sewing, and together they sat in the still room both busily working for the wherewithal to live, but both in the strange silence feeling that death might be in their presence. Speech was impossible. When the hours arrived for the administration of medicine, Anne laid her sewing softly by and with the tenderest care would lift the heavy head and press the medicine between the lightly parted lips. Tears would rise

to her eyes as she did so unaccountably, she told herself; but her back was always toward Dick at such times and he could not know. For Anne, in spite of the vague fear in her heart, tried to be her usual self—calm, undisturbed—on Dick's account.

At noon she and Dick ate a frugal lunch of crackers and milk, and then, after she had noiselessly washed the glasses and set them away, once more each took up the silent watch, yet worked busily.

As the afternoon wore away and twilight approached, Anne hurried to her rooms to prepare her father's dinner and attend to his comfort. He came home late and ill-tempered because of the cold and only enough of drink to intensify every evil element in his nature. He scowled at the slim, womanly figure moving about the white spread table under the soft glow from the lamp; and although she smiled and uttered some little commonplace speech—not wishing to tell him in his present state of their neighbor's illness—going up to assist him with his overcoat and hat, he pushed her roughly away and muttered some malediction upon her stupidity.

She did not resent his speech or action; a

sadness and pallor crept upon her face and around her mouth; that was all the visible change in her. And after a few minutes, still grumbling incoherently to himself, he threw himself into a chair beside the table, and waited impatiently for her to serve his dinner.

When this was over, and he went mumbling and muttering to bed, Anne noiselessly donned her hat and shawl, after the dinner things were cleared away, and stole softly out to her new duty. The night would be long, she knew, with the silence and sadness of a sick-room, for she had cared for her mother during her illness, but she had often worked through the night when there was any necessary work to be finished; so she willingly took up this care of her friend, a prayer in her heart that good should come to the lad should his mother be called away.

Nothing had occurred more than the usual routine of a sick-room when she reached her friend. Mrs. Chester's breathing was a little more marked, but the fever was not so high and the eyes were well closed as though sleep were fighting with unconsciousness and had won so far. She smiled as she entered and noted this, for there sat Dick, with his grave, pale face and earnest eyes, watching patiently with his mother

during these hours that might be—who could say?—their last hours together upon earth.

"Your mother is sleeping more quietly," Anne said softly under her breath to Dick, as she set the room neatly for the night before resuming her sewing by the shaded lamp. "Did the doctor come, Dick dear?"

Dick nodded several times, slowly.

"And he's comin' in the morning, Anne. He said 't he thought she'd sleep to-night. He seemed sorry 't you couldn't be here constant, but I telled him 't I was here, an' he said yes, o' course, to be sure, an' smiled. I like him, Anne!"

Anne smiled now, nodding in turn.

"He is a good man, Dick. I feel certain that he is doing all that he can for your mother."

A pause, eloquent with much unsaid and infinitely more unasked. Presently Dick asked, in an awed whisper, folding his hands among the paper work in his lap to keep fast hold of his bravery should Anne answer as he could not wish:

"Anne!"

"Yes, Dick dear."

"Marm's sick. Marm's dre'dful sick. I seen

it in his face when he come. I see it in yours, too. But—Anne!"

"Yes."

She was bending very low over her sewing that her face should be beyond his sight. Very pale it had grown, but with a sweetness upon it that sealed it with heaven's own pity.

Dick's eyes grew still larger watching her.

"Anne! Marm's sick, as I said, but—she'll get well, won't she?"

One instant's pause, and then Anne looked up, the light in her face quickening his, as though heaven in its great mercy had touched them both with some marvelous light.

"We are doing all that we can to get her well for you, laddie," she said, softly, "but if it is God's will to take her home, where she need work no more, nor worry, nor suffer pain——"

Silence. A broken pause of the girl's voice offering the sympathy of heaven to a tired soul.

"But I was goin' to work for her when I got growed, Anne! She wouldn't never get tired nor have to worry then! I've al'ays planned it! An' now——"

And now—over the quieting sleeper upon the pillows in the night watches settled the Great Silence whose future no man knows!

CHAPTER IX.

SILENCE.

"Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,
Morn of toil, nor night of waking."

—*Scott.*

But dawn had deepened into day ere Anne Barclay knew of the Great Silence fallen upon her friend. Tirelessly she sat beside the tiny stand where the shaded lamp threw softened light, her fingers and thoughts intensely busy. Dick was faithful to his watch until the small hours of morning, when, utterly wearied out, he sunk to sleep, his hands among the bits of his work, his head fallen back against the tall chair-back, his thin, grave face wan under the lamp's faint glimmer.

Anne smiled when she glanced up and saw him. He could be of no real benefit in watching, and he was faithful to his work. He needed sleep and rest. Why should she disturb him? The patient seemed sleeping more quietly. Her breathing was less labored, until it softened and faded faintly off into the Silence that could not be broken.

Anne did not notice this. She would not rouse her to administer medicine; sleep was best; so she only glanced occasionally across at the bed, and continued sewing, thinking over and over of the probable end to this illness and what would become of Dick. For Dick was uppermost in her thought. Mr. Millard's promise returned to her mind, but she knew that Dick would accept no favor at the hands of such a man. Were it not for her father, she would take the lad herself until he grew old enough to struggle alone; as it was, she pondered over this possibility, revolving it in her mind, considering if she might not do it—a little thing indeed—for the gentle boy, her friend's only son!

For Dick's face was before her there, pallid and thin in the faint light; and tears often blurred the stitches along the seams she sewed, looking at him.

Then, as dawn crept up through the openings in the streets and flamed faintly above the housetops, driving back the night, Anne rose softly to open the window and let in the outer light, in order that she might save the burning of the lamp. She moved noiselessly, not to rouse the patient nor the little lad asleep in his

chair over his work; and then, drawing in a deep breath of the crisp morning air to clear her lungs of all impurities, she closed the window, drawing aside the scant scrim curtains, and crossed the room to the bedside.

"How quietly she sleeps!" she murmured, pausing and bending over the sleeper. "I cannot hear a breath or movement!"

Then suspicion of the truth flashed upon her. All color died from her face and lips; her eyes widened and darkened. She laid one trembling hand lightly and tenderly upon the woman's forehead, trying to command the tremor that took possession of her, alone, as she felt that she was, with the dead! The brow she touched was cold; the lips motionless; the heart still. The Great Silence had come upon her so softly, so tenderly, like the infinite peace of heaven after pain, that there had been no struggle, no movement to betray what guest had come! Sleep had been hushed in the Mighty Slumber that wakens never upon earth!

Anne was startled. She could not wish her friend back to endure earth's bitter struggles, but she thought of the lonely lad asleep in the hard, high-backed chair, and a prayer trembled over her lips for him and his life to come—

alone! She scarcely knew what was required of her to do; when her mother died, kind neighbors attended to all that should be done; she felt that she must waken Dick to the sad reality of life, and let his sorrow soften before she summoned assistance.

It was a trying thing to do. She was scarcely more than a child herself, and she knew just how bitter the truth must be to him. But, with a half audible prayer upon her lips, she brushed gently back the straying hair upon the white, cold brow before her, and moved the hands that only perfect peace should be betrayed; then she softly crossed to Dick and knelt at his side, laying her arms tenderly about him.

"Dick, dear lad," she said.

Her voice was soft, but broken; the tenderness and pallor upon her face told more than words.

Dick, opening his great, startled eyes upon her, read the truth at once. For a moment he did not move or speak; he sat within Anne's encircling arms, his eyes upon hers. Then his gaze strayed to the bed, and putting her arms away from him he struggled down out of the chair, the bits of bright paper fluttering about his feet, and walking unsteadily to the bedside,

lifted himself on tiptoe, his hands clasped passionately behind him, and peered up to the peaceful, white face—once so ready to smile upon him—and held his breath to listen.

"Marm!" he said whisperingly, as though he scarcely dared address her, silent, lying unmoved before him.

"Marm!" he repeated in a lower key, as there came no response. "Marm!"

Still, silence; still, the closed eyes and immovable lips and quiet, cold face!

There was no doubt now of the truth. Never, never, never, so long as he should live, would this hushed form move or speak to him; his mother was gone; his mother was dead; he was alone!

With a low moan that was more sad than any wild cry or sobbing, Dick sunk down upon his knees beside the bed, clutching the covering in his thin hands convulsively, and buried his face away from Anne's sight. He did not sob or cry; he knelt there as though he were touched by the same stillness that had taken his mother away, and Anne's heart was filled with most infinite pity and tenderness, watching him.

Broad day had come upon them; life was going on in its usual routine; but these two did

not note the passing of time in their sorrow until steps upon the outer stairs, and a low tap upon the door, announced a visitor. Anne crossed to the door and opened it. The young physician entered with a low-spoken greeting.

"I have come early," he said, apologetically, "but I feared——"

Anne's swift gesture toward the bed silenced the words upon his lips. Instinctively he bowed his head.

"I knew that it must come," he said gently, standing beside her for a moment, unwilling to disturb the one small mourner crouching down by the bed. "I hoped it would not come so soon. Poor little lad!"

The tears would rise to Anne's eyes, try as she would to remain self-controlled. A slight quiver touched her lips.

"Yes, poor little Dick," she said softly. "I have thought more of him than of her, Dr. Benton! She is at rest, but he——"

"He shall be cared for, too," he said quietly. "You need not fear for your little friend, Miss Barclay. The world is tender-hearted, after all, if one touches the right chord!"

Then he crossed to the bed, and, stooping, laid one hand kindly upon Dick's shoulder.

"Come, lad! Come, lad!" he said gently. "The mother is past every ill; she sleeps the sleep that follows a brave life. We, too, must be brave, and lift up our burdens and fight it out—you and I and all! Isn't that as the mother would wish, Dick?"

For an instant Dick clung desperately to the coverings, burying his face still deeper within them. Then he lifted his quivering face to the bending, kindly face above him, and threw out his hands despairingly.

"But I'd 'a' took care o' marm when I was growed, doctor! I al'ays meant to! She shouldn't 've ever worked when I was old enough! An' now she's dead an' 'll never know! Marm! Marm! Why did you go—why did God take you before your Dick could show you what he could do an' keep you from workin' al'ays so hard? Why did you go?"

Dr. Benton shook his head with gentle pity for the lonely child, his hand still kindly resting upon the quivering shoulder.

"Poor lad! Poor Dick!" he said.

But after this wild cry of mourning Dick betrayed by no word or sign what his mother's death was to him. The neighbors were kind; all things that were necessary were attended to;

there were murmurs of regret for the young widow's death and sympathy for the little lad left to struggle against so many odds—alone! Such sympathy was shown after the first, however, only in kind glances and gentle acts, for the boy seemed deaf and dumb and blind to all save Anne Barclay and young Dr. Benton. Little enough he said to them, and never a word of regret, but only to them would he soften so far.

"It ain't natural," one of the neighbor women said one day to her companion, "for a child like him. Dick's a queer chap, we all know, but 'tain't right to let him go on so still like. He'll pine away an' follow his mother before long if he does."

"But there ain't nothing to do," protested another woman. "We've done all we can. We've showed him his pretty young ma a-lyin' there in her coffin, with the doctor's beautiful flowers around her, an' he looks on as indiff'rent as though she was stick or stone or a piece o' marble! He never touches her, nor speaks to her, nor cries. An' Anne's told him, as the doctor said for her to, that he wasn't to worry about a home, for he'd have one fast enough, an' friends too; an' she might as well be talkin'

to the dead woman in her coffin there for all answer he gave!"

These whisperings were within Dick's hearing, but he might in truth have been touched by the silence upon his mother for all sign he gave that he heard or comprehended.

This lack of interest in life caused Anne some uneasiness also, although, perhaps, she of them all could best appreciate the stunned sensibilities that made even tears impossible and speech utterly beyond thought since the mother influence was gone! She was as tender with him as though he were her younger brother; she was with him continually when she was not obliged to be with her father. Her father by this time had heard of Eleanor Chester's death, and held firm belief that she gave more time to the house of mourning than was at all required of her, therefore neglecting him. But Anne went quietly on, keeping silence when so accused, her conscience clear of wrong.

So the day of the funeral arrived, and Dick had taken his parting look at his mother and was waiting in the same unmoved silence beside Anne, his hand tightly held in hers, for the coffin to be removed ere they followed to the carriage. For Anne was going to the grave

with Dick. They were the only mourners. Dr. Benton had done everything in his power; the expenses of the funeral and the mourning garments came out of his own purse; he sent flowers for the dead and comforts to the living; but Dr. Benton's time was not his own, and he could not follow to the grave this woman—a stranger to him—whose brave life and death appealed to his kind heart.

He came in for a moment for a few last words of comfort and sympathy, and to see that all was well, as Anne and Dick stood waiting among a group of neighbors in the little back room. He was interested in Anne as well as in the lad. Her quiet manners and sweet thoughtfulness pleased and attracted him. He heard on every side of her unselfish life with her father. He had heard of old Barclay; never anything to his good; never before of his daughter.

"Keep up a good heart, lad!" he said, for one moment resting his hand lightly upon the boy's shoulder, stooping beside him. "When you come back your friend will bring you to me. I shall be glad to have you, Dick! We will be good friends, I am sure. Do not forget, Miss Barclay."

"It is not probable that we should forget

your kindness, Dr. Benton," Anne said softly, her shining eyes lifted to his, her sweet mouth trembling. "Dick is my brother now, but I can do so little for him!"

"An' is it nothing you have done for him an' his mother, Anne?" interposed one of the neighbors with some indignation. "If they'd been your very own kith an' kin you couldn't 'a' done more, settin' up of nights an' watchin' an' workin' continual!"

"It is nothing," said Anne, with quiet decision that silenced the other's volubility. "We all have done what we could; who could do less at such a time, Mrs. Frey?"

"Plenty of folks as I knows of!" murmured Mrs. Frey under her breath, fearing to further displease the girl.

But Dick, someway impressed by this argument through all his apathy, lifted his face to the physician's kind face bent down to him, his old quaint dignity heightened by sorrow.

"Everybody is very kind to me," he said, in his thin, piping voice, his great grave eyes grown large with unshed tears; "an' you specially, Dr. Benton—an' Anne! I'm glad Anne'll let me be her brother. When I get growed I can care for her 'stead o' marm. Marm's cared for now."

A slight choking of the boy-voice, the faintest perceptible pause, then he added steadily as the crooked shoulders squared with the manhood to come:

"But I couldn't go to anybody an' live on 'em, you know, 'thout workin'. It's only them as works that grow good men. Marm said so. She'd never let me live on nobody—marm wouldn't. She wouldn't do it herself. An' so, though I'm much obliged to you, Dr. Benton, thinkin' of me, I can jest stay on here near Anne an' work at my paper wind-wheels an' care for myself. Marm'd 'a' done it, an' I can!"

The ineffable pride of dignity and manhood in his face and voice! The squared shoulders and lifted head!

Dr. Benton's eyes smiled, but his lips were only infinitely tender, his hand still lightly lying on the lifted shoulder, as the undertaker's assistant beckoned them to go.

"Dick," he said gravely, Anne's eyes soft with tears at the gentleness of his voice, "I liked you from the first, but I honor you now! Yours is the winning spirit. We need not fear for him or his future, Miss Barclay, for it is in his soul. But if you will come to me, lad, you shall still make your wind-wheels and earn your

living so, until I have other work for you. Is it a bargain, Dick?"

But before Dick could answer, into the room very softly came Nellie Dean, her bright face tender with pity and showing her deep sympathy, her eloquent eyes uttering more than words. Her pretty red lips were quivering as she held out her hands to Dick under the young physician's eyes, entirely regardless of the swift gleam of admiration upon his face, utterly careless of any one but Dick in her intense sympathy. He was such a dear, brave, unselfish little fellow that he deserved every possible token of respect and pity.

Anne's pale face flushed with pleasure as she recognized the warm-hearted, impulsive girl. Dick would be glad to have her near him to comfort him, because she was Jim's sister.

"Dick, oh, Dick! I am so sorry, so sorry!" she said, her bright voice hushed by the presence of death and mourning. "Why didn't you tell me, Miss Barclay? Why didn't you send us word, so that I might have come and helped, if only a tiny bit? I'm not of much use in a sick-room, I know, but I could have come with fruit and flowers and such things, just to prove that I cared! I'm sorry—so sorry!"

"Pardon me," said Dr. Benton, in his usual professional tone, suddenly becoming aware through his surprised admiration for this vision of bright young health, that the undertaker was growing impatient at the delay. "If you are a friend you will wish to go with them, madam. Or will you wait here——"

"I shall go with them," answered Miss Dean quickly, lifting for an instant her frank, tearful eyes to the physician's face, "if they wish me to go. You, Miss Barclay, and Dick! It is all that I can do—now!"

The sight of her seemed to bring back all of Dick's sorrow and the woeful extent of his loss; his lips quivered, and a flash of convulsive pain struck across his pallid face. Then, with powerful self-command, remembering his pride and the coming years that should prove his strength of endurance, he conquered this betraying pain, and, still clinging to Anne with one slim hand, reached out the other to Miss Dean, his lips parting as though he would force even smiling as he looked back from the stairs to the physician following them down.

This lad was but one among many brave fellows whom the physician had seen, but bravery in any form is a man's admiration. Dr. Benton

not only admired but thoroughly respected this slip of a deformed lad in his dignity as he passed painfully down the stairs between his two friends—following all that remained of his mother upon earth, uttering not one murmur against Heaven's infinite justice, not one cry that God was cruel in so leaving him—alone!

"God bless you, lad!" the physician murmured, "you and your good angels!" as he closed the carriage door upon them and turned to his own carriage waiting for him to carry him into the midst of other pain and sorrow—the world so full of both!

"And yet there's always sunshine waiting to light the darkness!" added the young physician musingly, as he drove away to other patients and other work, his hands always full. "This boy Dick will make his life the broader and better and stronger because of this sorrow and loss! His manhood will be softened and uplifted by this boyhood's grief. I know!"

He knew indeed! Dr. Benton was not one to talk of himself; one's self was manifested in one's actions, he said, arguing this point at the commencement of his professional career. Listening to the sorrows of others, how one's own dwindle down! The sorrow of his own mother-

less life was great, but he never obtruded his pain upon others. He could bear it alone with God's help. Any man could—or woman.

So it was that Dick was close to his heart and strong in his thought that morning, driving away from this house of death to houses where death must come.

"God be with the lad!" he said, and the wish came from his heart. But he was not one whit less attentive or careful of his patients for all that, and no one guessed how the morning began with a boy's farewell to his mother and the mother's irresponsive lips sealed under the coffin lid!

And as for Dick himself, he scarcely thought of the physician as he sat beside Anne in the coach, clinging to her hand with a strength of desperation that was painful to her, although she would not let him know,—with Nellie Dean's bright face opposite, softened and saddened by this great sorrow come to her little friend almost without warning.

"Marm's gone!" he kept repeating to himself over and over in a mechanical sort of fashion, as though he were a bit of machinery set to that refrain. "Marm's gone!" Yet no tears would rise in his eyes, no quiver touch the stern child

lips, no break in the boy dignity and pride,—as though the power to feel had gone from him, leaving him but the semblance of a child.

"Marm's gone! She can't never come back; never speak nor smile nor move again; never even look at me—at Dick—her boy again! Yet I don't seem to care, an' I can't help it! I loved her, I know—I love her now—but I can't show it 'ceptin' by bein' real quiet an' brave as al'ays she wished. Marm! Marm!"

But outwardly very still and undisturbed by sorrow he sat with his friends, listening in the same mechanical manner to the rumble of the coach wheels over the hard roads and the occasional other sound of heavier wheels ahead that told him over and over the same story of sorrow and desolation and a mother gone away forever from earth, waiting for her boy in the land beyond the Mighty Silence that leaves so many hearts mourning and murmuring to know what lies unseen!

CHAPTER X.

A NEW HOME.

"Be noble! and the nobleness that lies
In other men, sleeping, but never dead,
Will rise in majesty to meet thine own."

—*Lowell.*

THE coach stopped at Barclay's door, returning from the churchyard, where all that remained earthy of Eleanor Chester rested under a mound beneath a broad oak, where autumn's golden sunlight sifted lavishly.

Anne chose this spot. She drove out with Dr. Benton the previous day at his request, and they decided that the grave should be there where sunlight and shadow mingled. It was comforting to think that this busy life could be at rest in such a tender spot. For this was a country graveyard, riotous in summer with long grasses and wild flowers, with the shadow of the church steeple falling aslant the graves at its feet, and the voice of the choir on Sunday seemed to drift out and mingle with the voices

of the dead, gone beyond the church's shadow, where the Lamb is the light!

Even Dick's sorrowing heart was comforted, leaving the coffin there.

"For marm's in Heaven!" he said to his friends as they turned away, his wistful eyes searching their faces. "'Tain't marm there!"

And they reassured him with tearful eyes, perhaps, but with lips trembling into smiling, rolling away from the graveyard where the last low notes of the boy choir drifted and faded and died in the grand hymn to "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

But as they drew up at Anne's door, Miss Dean leaned over, laying one hand coaxingly upon Anne's arm and one upon Dick's shoulder, her bright eyes pleading with them as well as her voice.

"You know that you can go if you will, Miss Barclay! Your father will not be at home until night, and we will see that you get home safely. You may carry your sewing, of course, if you really wish to. We shall be glad to have you even in that way, and I fear Dick will not go with me unless you go for this day at least. Please come, if you can!"

"I can go that way—yes," said Anne thought-

fully, turning from the eager face before her to the pallid face at her side. "But what about Dr. Benton, Miss Dean? Dick was to go at once to him. He offered him a home, you remember, first."

"But he wouldn't have offered it first if we had known sooner!" protested Miss Dean swiftly, the light hand upon Dick's shoulder pressing down caressingly. "Dick liked our home the day you stopped there, and we like Dick; we will be very glad to have him with us. He can be as independent as he chooses; every one must be independent to be truly happy, Jim says; so he need not hesitate for that."

"But your mother," suggested Anne gently, reading the girl's impulsive heart, and, with more forethought than most girls possess, also remembering that there were others to consult before such a step could be decided. "And your brother, Miss Dean?"

"You forget," replied Miss Dean undaunted, "that I told you we all like Dick, Miss Barclay. When I left home this morning upon hearing what had happened—we read the name in the paper, and Jim said it must be Dick's mother, for it was where he lived—both mamma and Jim

made me promise to bring Dick back with me. We will do all that we can to make him happy, and after a while I believe that he will be, Miss Barclay."

"I do not doubt that," said Anne gently, remembering Dick's enthusiastic admiration for the pretty home among the vines and trees; thinking also how strangely and often sadly one's wishes are granted. "I will go with you if you will wait for me to get my work, Miss Dean; and then about Dr. Benton? He should know how Dick's prospects have changed."

Miss Dean nodded brightly, a flush gathering upon her cheeks at her success, as Anne stepped out.

"We will drive to the doctor's," she replied composedly, "and I shall leave my card with a pencilled message upon it telling where Dick has gone; then my brother can call upon him to-night and explain more fully. That is easy enough, Miss Barclay; it is only you whom I find hard to win!"

"And it was only the other day," said Anne, turning with her hand upon the gate latch, "that I refused to go to you, Miss Dean!"

"It is so strange how things come about!" said Miss Dean, more to herself than to Dick,

as she leaned back upon the cushion waiting for Anne.

And Dick seemed to comprehend that he was not expected to reply, and sat very still in his corner of the carriage, his hands clasped, also waiting for Anne.

"Jim can make it all right with this doctor, too, I know," added little Miss Dean with charming positiveness, as she stared out of the carriage window upon the small white house where Anne lived, "for no one can resist Jim when he chooses to be nice. And he'll be very nice to you," continued this small tyrant, her bright eyes turning upon the crouching boy, "for he likes you, Dick, and you'll like him!"

And Dick, unable to utter his gratitude in words, lifted his grave, eloquent eyes to hers, the faintest tremor on his lips; and she needed no words to read his heart's deep thankfulness.

And Jim went. He admired Anne for her brave struggle and noble life; that was all.

He was thinking of this as he walked along—he was a good walker and seldom rode—and approved of himself, believing that this was all.

"It was just like her to take the boy's sorrow to herself," he said approvingly. "I don't believe that she could help it. But I wish that

more people had such a friend in the time of need as Anne Barclay! She would have taken the boy, too, I suppose, and worked for him and cared for him as though he were in truth her own, if we hadn't claimed him. I don't believe that she would have allowed him to go to this strange doctor. It is all very well for him to have been kind to them at such a time—he couldn't have helped himself—but I don't believe that Anne Barclay would have ever let the little homesick lad go from her care to him."

He found, when at last he arrived at the physician's house, that Dr. Benton was a remarkably cordial, pleasant man, very near his own age, not more than a couple of years older at the most. Office hours were over, and he was stealing a moment's rest before starting upon his night calls, his feet thrust into slippers and cosily resting upon the fender before the grate, leaning back in his arm-chair, doing absolutely nothing for the moment, he explained, laughing, as he rose to meet his guest with outstretched hand of welcome.

"I am glad that you have come, Mr. Dean," he added genially, pulling a chair around for his guest and reseating himself. "At first, I will acknowledge, I was considerably put out at the

summary manner in which your sister carried away my boy—for I have a fancy for the boy—but when I came to consider the matter and think of his good as well as my own pleasure, I could not fail to see the advantage of his being in such a home as yours and among such influences, than in a bachelor's house like mine, where all care and attentions are paid for, so much for so long. Besides, the boy will feel differently with you; he has known you longer; I am almost a stranger to him."

"But you have been a hundred times more kind to him than I, or my mother or sister, Dr. Benton," said Jim Dean, with a pleasant laugh. He was irresistibly drawn toward this man in spite of his well-fixed determination before reaching there, of disliking him intensely. "Kindness tells in the long run, doctor."

"And the short, too, eh? Well!" Dr. Benton frowned as though praise were distasteful to him. "He has chosen the better home of the two, Mr. Dean. A woman's influence is always more subtle and lasting than a man's."

Doubtless he was thinking of Anne, young Dean told himself, watching him, and a frown darkened his own brows. No one could be

with Anne Barclay and not feel the influence of her pure, unselfish life.

"I'll tell you frankly, Mr. Dean," Dr. Benton continued, leaning across the arm of his chair the better to address confidentially the young man beside him, one-half of his fine face in shadow, that of his companion full in the light. "I like Dick Chester; I liked him from the first; he has grit, and that's what we need for successful lives. But my desire to have him with me didn't altogether arise from that, but because I feel that, with careful treatment, good nursing, and good hearty food, that boy may—perhaps not be entirely cured—but helped to such an extent that life shall yet be a pleasure to him.

"I did not wish to tell him; I do not wish him to know it now, for if it should end in failure—such cases are impossible to accurately diagnose without long acquaintance—such a disappointment would be deadly bitter to his ambitious spirit. I decided to take him into my home especially for this purpose. I knew from the first that his mother could not recover and that he had no one who could lay claim to him save kindly neighbors, who doubtless had more than enough of their own to care for——"

"Anne Barclay again!" muttered Jim Dean to himself, though still giving the physician his apparently quiet attention.

"Part of my plan has failed at the start," added Dr. Benton, smiling, "but I do not believe that the rest will end so badly. Still, it is better for him to be with you among pleasant surroundings and with pleasant, lively people, than with me, where he would see and hear many things to sadden his already shadowed life. I consider myself his friend, and if you are willing I shall still carry out my intentions with regard to his case. As I say, it may end in failure, but I have strong hope because of his youth."

"Anything that you can do," said Jim Dean, with his old, good-natured manner, ashamed of his dark thoughts before this man's quiet strength of soul, "I assure you, doctor, will be gratefully appreciated by his friends. Such a brave fellow deserves all the good that is possible. My home is open to you at any time. We shall be glad to welcome you as our friend, too."

"I thank you," said Dr. Benton simply, rising as his guest arose, and once more extending his hand in cordial friendship. "My time is never my own, but as there is a patient in your house

I shall feel that it is not altogether a selfish desire that shall call me there. I have also spoken to Miss Barclay relating to the boy, for she was his oldest friend, you remember, and she considers our course a wise one."

"You have seen Miss Barclay, then, Dr. Benton?"

"Yes," not a ruffle in the quiet, genial voice, "I saw her to-night before you came, Mr. Dean, because I wished to have her decision first; that should outweigh ours, because of her undeviating kindness to the little fellow."

"Yes," acquiesced young Dean, his hold upon the other's outstretched hand somewhat relaxing; and he said it as though there were other and more harsh thoughts behind it.

CHAPTER XI.

AN ANNOUNCEMENT AND DENOUNCEMENT.

The ring and the words of the book may make
A glad heart joyous, a sad heart break.

—*Author.*

"THERE is to be a wedding at St. James' to-morrow," said Nellie Dean, carefully balancing her spoon upon the frail edge of the Canton china cup before her, allowing her chocolate to cool. "Of course everybody here knows whose wedding it is, and equally, of course, everybody here knows that Nellie Dean is going; that the carriage is to be here at two; and that dear little Mamma Dean and Dick and Anne Barclay are going with me. I had to win Anne to this with actual tears and entreaties, but she has promised, and I'm not at all afraid of her breaking a promise."

Her brother laughed. Her brother often laughed at Miss Dean's positive assertions; but Miss Dean sometimes snubbed her brother's laughter.

"I trust that Miss Barclay has the same con-

fidence in Miss Dean," he said, in amusement. "Well! As for the wedding, Miss Millard has chosen a fine young man, they say, her equal in every way. Their courtship began rather disastrously in a runaway, but that fact apparently does not daunt them in the least, and, no doubt, their marriage will end as happily as most others."

"There's a spice of cynicism in that tone," said Miss Dean saucily, tipping her spoon as she turned her bright eyes upon her brother. "What do you know of unhappy marriages, pray? and if lovers were daunted by such trivial things as you suggest, why, poor lovers indeed they would be! They should care the more for each other, Mr. Wiseman, because of their mutual danger. Isn't that better, Dick?"

Always including him in their conversation, their pleasures and happiness!

Dick smiled. With Nellie Dean's bright eyes upon him and the dimples playing at hide-and-seek around her mouth, and her pretty head upon one side archly, Dick usually did smile upon her. She was next to Anne in his thought of women; she could never take Anne's place; Anne was quite different; but he liked Nellie Dean.

"There!" said Miss Dean with a triumphant nod of her bright head as this smile touched his face. "And mamma agrees with me too, and you're in the minority, Mr. Savage-words! Marriages are sometimes happy, and there is no reason why Miss Millard's should not be classed among this number, and I hope it will be, for she's as sweet and pretty and deserving as any bride in the world!"

For a moment after this breezy self-defense Miss Dean was lost to argument as she sipped the chocolate from the dainty cup. Whereupon her brother accepted the opportunity to answer her.

"I may know from personal experience very little about marriages, happy or otherwise, Nell," he said, and there was an undercurrent of gravity in his voice that silenced her light words. "But I do happen to know something about young Cartwright that makes me—or would make me regret this particular marriage, did I not also know that his lady possesses the same fault. Perhaps it is a strange thing for a former bartender to say—I beg your pardon, mother, but I must refer to that this once—but when a young fellow prides himself upon a will strong enough to admit of his drinking just so

much liquor and never one drop more, I think that the lady who marries him is in danger of an unhappy life. Few men can do this; certainly not a man who will brag of being able to do so! That's young Cartwright.

"I have known it all along, and, as I said, I should pity the lady—Miss Millard is a charming woman—but I also know that it is her practice to do the same. Doubtless she doesn't brag of doing it; probably she has never even argued it with herself; but that she makes use of liquor upon all and every provocation I know positively.

"Considering this, it seems to me that this is an even match. Each can cause the other indescribable humiliation and sorrow. They may never do it, but in my short life I have seen so much of liquor and its misuse—in Millard's model saloon, too—that I believe one drop down my throat would choke me! Since you two little women perusuaded me to give up even the selling of it, I see its sorrow clearer every day, and I shall always regret that my hand has helped, perhaps, many a man down! For Millard's principle may be all very well, but it will never work until every saloon and every place that sells liquor adopts the same rule. What a

man cannot get there, he will go for to the next saloon.

"If I knew that I had spoiled any man's life, or darkened the life of any woman through handing a glass of liquor across that cursed bar, I believe it would haunt me forever!"

He spoke so rapidly and with such unusual vehemence, one hand clenched upon the table, his cheeks flushed, his eyes blazing, that awed silence fell upon his companions. Even Miss Nellie forgot to toy with her spoon or coquette with her pretty head.

"I never thought of it in just that way before," ventured this young woman presently, her eyes lifted timidly to her brother's excited face. There were times when Nellie Dean was afraid of her tall brother. "I suppose almost always when a man becomes a drunkard, it spoils or saddens the life of his wife or family."

"Always!" affirmed her brother with abrupt positiveness. "Always, Nellie!"

"Like Anne," said Dick in his thin, timid voice, half under his breath, his eyes lifted wistfully to Jim Dean's face.

"Yes—like Anne!" reiterated Dean, the clenched hand upon the pretty Chinese tablecloth showing swelling veins and tense cords

as though if he might he would by force change her life!

And for a moment no one spoke. Intense feeling was too plainly manifested by the young man to admit of argument. It was seldom that he betrayed to them the inner feelings and workings of his mind, and although he had given up his position under Millard, he laughingly protested that it was solely because of the importunity of his mother and sister.

But let what would be said on the matter by strangers or friends, Minnie Millard was the picture of happiness and loveliness on her wedding morning.

The day was perfect; not a cloud shadowed the exquisite blue heavens; the sunlight was so clear, striking through the miles of ether upon the earth, that the earth caught a new glory as of heaven. A soft down of snow was laid like a spotless carpet of white over all. A bridal day of earth and heaven; was it strange that a girl's heart should throb with new life, remembering that it was her bridal day as well?

Minnie Millard, when wakened by her maid that morning, opened her blue eyes upon a perfect world. Parting the lace drapery at the window she looked out with a face so charming

in its inner sunshine of happiness that her lover might have loved her more had he known.

"What a wonderful day, Suzette!" she said, with the impulsiveness of a child, turning from the window, though still one white hand held back the drapery that the full, broad, golden light should flood the room. "It could not be more perfect if one experimented forever with ether and clouds and fire!"

"And it's right it should be such a day," affirmed Suzette, as much fluttered as her mistress, being young and pretty, "for the old proverb must come true for you, Miss Minnie!"

"Happy the bride on whom the sun shines?" queried Minnie happily, smiling and blushing most bewilderingly. "Thank you, Suzette. If you will tell mamma now that I am awake, I think that she will wish to come in at once. There is so much to be done."

So much to be done indeed, with the bride and bridesmaids to look after; to see that the gowns were correctly draped, and the wines set in the dining-room to flow for healths to the bride; the presents to be unpacked and arranged, and the all-comprehensive thought uppermost in the mother's mind that the only daughter, the home's sunshine, her baby, grown,

was to leave the old home that day to never return the same!

She would be near them; she was not to leave them utterly; she could come and go among the old rooms and smile upon them and give them love words and be warm in their hearts; but never the child needing, craving a mother's care, but a woman reigning in a home of her own apart from them with her husband's interests first in her heart and the old home a sweet, bygone memory.

Her wedding day!

It was to be a late, church wedding; dinner afterward, and then the bridal couple would start upon a trip South and so on to the West and around home in the spring by way of the Northern Pacific route. To Minnie the thought was delightful, for she was especially fond of travelling and sight-seeing; to her parents it meant long separation; but they acknowledged even so that they knew when they gave up their daughter she could never again be their own.

"It won't seem long at all!" said Minnie, as they talked of the trip that day by snatches, with the bridesmaids hovering about her. "I shall write you all about the places we see and the comical things that happen—you remember

that something comical always does happen wherever I go, girls!—and when we return home how much I shall have to tell you!"

"Which will be delightful, of course," said Maud Carew dubiously; she was one of the bridesmaids, and the day was not far off when she too would don the white bride-satin; "but not nearly so nice as going one's self, Minnie!"

"And seeing with one's eyes the beautiful places," added Sade Anderson regretfully.

"And not having to wait for letters which never do come when one wishes them to!" supplemented Belle Hyatt with a pretty little grimace.

"N-no," said Minnie reflectively as she touched caressingly the bouquet of white roses sent her by her lover; "but then you ought to be glad of even that, girls!"

"And you are not so strong yet as to be able to endure much fatigue; you must be careful for some time, Minnie, as Dr. Farjeon said," Mrs. Millard told her later with tender solicitude, snatching a moment's quiet with her daughter. "Such severe injuries as you received in that accident take months to thoroughly repair."

"I am sure that Tom will take very good care

of me; you need not worry, foolish mamma," said Minnie fondly, her face lovely in its flushing and paling.

"We could wish you no better husband than the one whom you have chosen, Minnie," added Mrs. Millard after a short pause. "He is everything that could be desired, my dear; we made certain of that before trusting your happiness to him."

"Every one has been good to me all my life," said Minnie sweetly; "is it probable, mamma, that just because I am going to be married all things will change? I know that I shall be happy. Why should I not?"

Mrs. Millard smiled, and was silent; she could not darken the girl's bright hopes with thoughts of sorrow and unhappiness, such as strangely crowded upon her thoughts that day.

And so, as the sun slanted slowly from the west through the high, stained windows of the church, and twilight was fast approaching, the bells chimed merrily a wedding peal for Minnie Millard and Tom Cartwright; and the guests assembled in the old church pews, filling the place with perfumes and flower scents, and glimmer of silks and laces and beautiful faces and bright eyes; and those unbidden who entered from curiosity,

all murmured their admiration and approval as the pretty bride passed up to the chancel in her trailing satin, the soft veil touching her face with almost indefinable, delicate shadow, her hands trembling a little, one holding her flowers, the other lightly lying upon her father's arm.

And a charming group it was, the bride and groom, well mated, every one said, and the charming bridesmaids and handsome groomsmen, and the parents standing a little aside, putting away their coming loneliness to wish their daughter only the happiness due her youth and beauty and innocence.

And the pretty bride's voice was sweet and low, murmuring the responses, while that of the bridegroom was steady and unmoved as he uttered the words that bound himself to love and protect, "until death should them part," the small, trusting woman at his side. And who among those assembled there dared breathe other than belief in the happiness of the two at the altar?

"It must be pleasant," said Anne very softly, "to have so many friends and know that they all desire one's happiness."

"An' when you get married, Anne, you shall

have everything like this," said Dick whisperingly, but with quiet conviction. "Some day I'm goin' to ask Mr. Dean—I'd forgot 'bout it till now—more of what Miss Millard said that day that flowers meant lovin'. He'll tell me if I ask him, Anne. He's wonderful good to me."

"But you must never ask him, Dick," said Anne sternly, frightening him by the new tone of her voice, though she spoke but in a whisper. "What would he say! what would he think——"

"I'm dreadfully sorry that I came," murmured Nellie Dean, leaning between them to utter her thought, not knowing of their hurried words, her bright face clouded, her eyes grown wistful, all her archness gone for the moment; "because, do you know, Anne Barclay, I can think of nothing, hear nothing, see nothing but the possible fulfillment of Jim's words concerning them. Even the sunlight striking through that red pane over there rests upon her head like wine lightly thrown and straying down—do you see it, Anne?—upon the lovely lace veil! If it should be that either or both——"

"You must keep silence upon such things at a wedding, dear," said Mrs. Dean smiling, laying one hand softly upon her daughter's arm. "You

must wish a bride happiness, Nellie; what will come afterward only the future will prove."

"But suppose it proves evil?" murmured Nellie under her breath, her eyes following, as though fascinated, every movement of the bright, veiled head with the sunlight stained blood red upon it before the altar rail.

CHAPTER XII.

A NEW DEFENDER.

No man with manhood in his veins could stand
And see a woman suffer, or a child.

—*Author.*

"It's a powerful good thing that Millard's daughter's married off at last," growled John Barclay, with a lowering, side-long look at Anne as he entered the room with his usual shambling gait, emphatically slamming the door behind him. "They've been a-settin' their traps long enough tryin' to get her settled, an' now they've done it. A fine, stuck-up fellow she's married, true enough—after Millard's own heart with his hypocrisy and pride—an' I hope now he'll learn that his daughter ain't no more likely to go a-sailin' into heaven than any other man's daughter."

As he spoke he flung his hat into a chair as though he were venting his spite upon Millard himself, and sunk down upon the same chair.

Anne made no reply. She had laid aside her sewing as soon as she heard her father's step on

the stairs, and rose to prepare their simple dinner. Dick was watching her, too, for Dick had come to spend the afternoon with Anne, and Mr. Dean was to stop for him on his way home. So far Mr. Dean had not come, and it was quite dark in the streets save where the lamps flickered and flared in the windy gusts that swept around corners and up and down the streets as though to purify them.

"He has forgotten to come, Dick," said Anne, as they watched among the hurrying passers-by for the one tall figure. "He will come for you after dinner, for Miss Dean will not allow you to return alone, and we can have a cosy dinner here."

In her heart she was not so positive that the dinner would be cosy, well aware of her father's dislike of company; but she was as bright and assured in manner as though her father were the most cordial, most affectionate among men.

But Dick shook his head positively.

"Mr. Jim never forgets," he said. "He'll come, Anne, presently."

Still, he had not come, and now Barclay was at home; and Barclay hated Mr. Dean; and although Anne would not mar one moment of the boy's stay, yet in her own heart she was

fearful of what might come should her father and young Dean meet in her father's present state. For Barclay was more than usually in liquor that night.

Nevertheless, she went quietly about the room preparing the dinner, her father watching her from under his heavy, frowning brow, as though there were more that he wished to say and was yet half fearful to utter with that calm face before him. And Dick watched them both in a trembling sort of way; for Dick was in deadly fear of Barclay, and sat very still in his chair, if by any possibility he might remain unnoticed, fearing, too, that his presence might call down some harshness upon Anne.

"Come," said Anne presently, and as cheerfully as she could, "dinner is ready, father. It has been such a cold day that you must be hungry. Come, Dick dear, I have given you a place between father and me."

Barclay turned sharply upon him as Anne addressed him, and the boy shrank back in his chair, not knowing what was best to do.

"I ain't hungry, Anne," he faltered very low. "Besides, Mr. Jim will be along in a minute, an' 'twouldn't be worth while to set down an' only have to get right up an' go away."

Barclay turned upon him fiercely. He had risen to go to the table, and now held to the back of a chair to steady himself as he faced the boy. His eyes were bloodshot, his face flushed with liquor, his heavy, lowering brows making his face repulsively cruel.

Dick knew when too late that he had made a mistake in speaking of Jim Dean. Anne's wistful eyes entreated him to silence. But the harm, if harm there was, had been already done.

"Oh!" said old Barclay with a drunken gesture of scorn. "You choose fine friends for yourself—you, boy! I've give my daughter orders, an' 'twouldn't be a bad idea for you to follow 'em, that she's to have no more to do with such mighty self-important folks as them Deans an' Millards. There's other girls spoiled enough; my girl sha'n't be spoiled if old Barclay's got anythin' to say about it, an' I rather think he has. Young folks ought to take care of the old ones; they had to when I was a boy; but nowadays things is diff'rent. It's everybody for himself now. They'd spoil my girl too that way—make her selfish an' forgetful of her father—if I didn't keep her down an' out of the way of such meddlin' folks. That Jim Dean's one of the young sprigs, too. Thought he could say

what he liked behind Millard's bar, did he? Talked mighty pert to an old man like me—old enough to be his father. But I stopped Anne's speakin' or noticin' him, an' she sha'n't do it if he dares to come here to-night! I'm here now! It's my house, he'll please remember, an' them as I don't want here ain't to come. It'd be best for you if some one stopped you too, Dick Chester. What'd your marm say if she were alive an' knew who you've took up with, I'd like to know?"

Dick's face quivered an instant at this coarse mention of his mother, one hand involuntarily grasping the back of his chair, his grave eyes with a new fire in them steadily meeting those other bloodshot eyes.

But Anne, fearing a scene, knowing far better than the boy what was her father's humor when in his present state of intoxication; knowing also that, small and deformed though he was, Dick Chester would hear none but respectful words of his mother, turned to Dick with a smile that entreated him to say nothing, and laid her hand persuasively upon her father's shoulder.

"Come," she said gently, drawing his eyes to her and away from the boy. "Dinner will be cold, father. I made a little oyster stew for

you—you are so fond of oysters—and I'm sure they're seasoned nicely; come eat them while they're hot."

She said no more about Dick's joining them; she knew that it was better not.

For a moment her father glared down into her eyes in a sort of fascination, as though silenced by the sweetness and purity of her face. Then he threw off her hand with a muttered imprecation, falling back a step or two in his unsteady effort to stand erect. His eyes, shot with the fire of liquor, were cruel now. He caught at the chair again to steady himself, and lifted one hand, clenched, threateningly toward her.

She did not shrink, but met his gaze calmly, as though she would quiet the storm she knew instinctively was rising.

"Maybe you thought," he said fiercely, standing, roughly threatening, before her, "that I didn't know how you'd gone against my wishes, or maybe you thought that I wouldn't speak if I did. But I know—I heard. I ain't so blind nor yet so forgivin' as to make out I'm a fool an' afraid to say what I've got to say to my own daughter! I didn't go to the weddin' yesterday—I wouldn't 'a' been seen goin' there, I've got

too much self-respect for that—but I heard an' might have known 'twould be so with my daughter, a-breakin' her promise to me constant an' goin' an' doin' for them as I've forbid her doin' for—that you was there, Anne Barclay, bold an' brazen as all the rest along of Jim Dean's folks that I've told you over an' over I won't have you goin' with!"

He brought his hand down heavily upon the back of the chair, and then lifted it again menacingly, taking a step toward her, added wrath in his eyes.

"I suppose the next I know—for when once a woman begins to deceive there ain't no tellin' where she'll stop—that you'll be a-gettin' married, Anne Barclay, an' leavin' your father to go to the dogs, or starve, or die in the streets! You ain't got no more gratitude than the rest, an' ain't no better. But mark my words,"—he came so very close to Anne now with that lifted arm and threatening face that Dick slipped swiftly from his chair and stood beside it, one hand clenched upon it, one reached out as though he would stop some cruel deed, his whole sensitive face alive with fear and determination.

"Mark my words, Anne Barclay, if ever you should forget my self-respect and pride, as well

as your own, enough to do it, an' should take up with that Jim Dean—such things have happened before now—I'd strike you down at the altar itself, as I do now!"

He brought that cruel, lifted arm down with drunken fury to strike the girl, but Dick was more swift than he. With a cry to Anne he ran forward and caught at her hands and dress and dragged her aside with a strength born of love and excitement. But the man, not to be thwarted, staggered forward, and the blow intended for his daughter fell instead upon the boy's shoulder.

He uttered no cry; his pride and thought for Anne would not admit that when he saw her white, terrified face bending above him; but he shut his teeth down over his suffering, falling back against her from the force of the blow, still pushing her aside.

She attempted to shield him with her arms, her face white like death in her fear for him, but he held her hands and pushed her away beyond the man's reach with a strength marvelous in his weak little frame.

And then the hall door opened and Jim Dean paused only an instant on the threshold.

"I knocked," he said, at first not knowing of

the scene enacted there," but you did not hear me. I have come for Dick. Pardon me, Miss Barclay."

Then the truth flashed upon him, seeing the pallid faces before him and the attitude of the man shrinking back, now that a defender had come for the girl and the little lad, and crossing the room, tall, calm, powerful in his youth and chivalrous spirit, he paused between Barclay and his daughter and Dick, his hands clenched at his side.

Anne had been pale before; now the crimson blood of shame and pride and pity for the lowered manhood of her father rushed in a tide to her face; but Dean's face was set white and stern as he looked upon her, ere turning to the drunken man facing them.

"So! Is this the way you treat your daughter, Barclay?" he said coldly, his eyes fixed sternly upon the bloodshot eyes that now began to waver and fall, for Barclay was a coward with men. "You forget yourself! You forget your manhood and the consequences that will follow from the law upon such acts of violence! If I hear of this again—only once again, remember—I shall put you beyond the power of doing harm to any one. Coward! To strike a woman—and such a woman!"

And as they passed out upon the stairs a moment later to relieve Anne of the embarrassment of their presence, Dick clung to his friend, wild with fear.

"I can't leave Anne!" he whispered eagerly. "I wouldn't dare leave Anne alone with him, Mr. Dean! You don't know what he is."

"Yes, I think that I know pretty thoroughly," answered Jim, still speaking sternly, but with a gentle pressure of the hand Dick held so closely. "Pretty thoroughly, Dick!"

Dick faltered a moment, fearful for Anne, his voice sinking with dread as he said hesitatingly:

"How do you know 'bout it, Mr. Dean? Your father didn't—didn't—drink, did he? I thought you all loved him so much, an' I couldn't 'a' loved him nor anybody if he drank an' acted like—Anne's father!"

A shade of pain and pity crossed the fine young face bent above the child's wistful, lifted eyes.

"No," he answered very gently, softening the harshness of his voice before this strange little lad. "My father was an honorable man, Dick—kind and good and true. He would have died to save a woman; he would have never touched her to her harm! But my life outside

of my home has taught me many sad things, my boy, and perhaps helped me to comprehend the sufferings of others. Still, dear lad, you need not fear to leave your friend to-night. She is as safe from molestation as though we stayed here, you and I, to watch. I know the man I was dealing with. Only cowards will harm a woman, and cowards are fearful of strong words from a man. Come, Dick."

Reluctantly, only half convinced, yet not wishing to show that he doubted him, Dick turned away his face from the partly open door through which a soft line of light made deep shadows beyond, and with difficulty descended the stairs with his protector.

Jim Dean did not know that Barclay struck the boy, and Dick would not betray it on Anne's account had the pain been ten times as severe as it was; and it was very severe; and Anne was too stunned by fear and humiliation to utter so much as one word of reproach or thanks.

The blow was heavier than even Dick knew at first; the excitement, the fear for Anne, then alarm for his brave friend come to their rescue dulled the pain; now, however, as he painfully and slowly descended the stairs, the sharp arrows of pain shooting through his shoulder re-

minded him that the mark of Barclay's drunken wrath was upon him.

"But I'm glad it wasn't Anne," he comforted himself by repeating under his breath many times. "I'm glad it wasn't Anne!"

They reached the lower landing and Jim was stooping to turn the key and open the door, when the soft, thin line of light above widened and brightened, and on the stairway, coming down to them, was Anne, pale and wistful-eyed, but quite calm.

A smile lighted Jim Dean's face as he looked up and saw her; a smile that was more than kind, or sorrowful, or pleased; a smile so eloquent of the heart behind it that the lighted face must have betrayed his tender thought of her! But Anne,—half proud, trying to shield her father from blame; half shy, remembering this young man's many kindly acts; half fearful, thinking also and most of the boy's possible suffering from her father's brutality,—did not wait to fathom the meaning of that wonderful smile upon Dean's face, but hastened almost noiselessly with her light feet down the stairs.

She paused on the lower stair; she flushed and paled with shame, now that she must speak of her father's action. She reached out her

hand to Dick as though to entreat his pardon for her father's cruelty, clinging with the other to the narrow rail to prevent her falling beneath her disgrace.

"Dick," she said very sweetly, very low, her shining eyes now searching his face, now raised to the kind, fine, manly face of his companion. "Dick, dear, I am so very, very sorry! He wouldn't have done it, Dick, he couldn't have done it, had he been himself; but the men he sees, they lure him on and coax and flatter him, knowing his little weaknesses, and he forgets that he should not listen; and when he—forgets—so—Dick, he doesn't know what he does! He wouldn't have done it otherwise!"

Dick's face, also, from being pallid flushed crimson now, and with a finger on his lips and his large eyes entreating her to speak no further, tried to drag his companion away ere she should say more.

Anne understood. She honored him for his brave unselfishness, too, but she knew that she was right and would not be silenced. She descended the last step and laid one hand timidly upon Mr. Dean's arm, lifting her sweet, shy, proudly grieved face to his, the other hand tenderly resting upon the boy's head.

"Mr. Dean," she said quite steadily, struggling to be calm, "Dick has not told you? I might have known that he would not, he has always been so thoughtful of me. But—my father—struck him—to-night, Mr. Dean, and I fear has done him great injury!"

"No, no!" cried Dick eagerly, loosening his hold upon Jim's hand and pulling down the hand upon his head to clasp it tightly within his own, his face quivering with his earnest wish to convince them that he had not been hurt, not in the least. "It is nothing, Mr. Dean,—it was nothing, truly! Just a little blow! I escaped it, you know, Anne—you, and I!"

Jim Dean looked from one to the other in silence. He perfectly understood the situation, but he could not bring himself to speak at once. That the brutal man in the room above—now probably in a sound drunken sleep—had dared lift his hand against this frail girl or this weak little fellow striving to defend her, was the worst he had feared! He had only feared it; he did not believe that the man would more than threaten them, and here he had done the worst!

He caught his breath hard, and the hand upon the door-latch gripped it firmly as though it

were the throat of the man. His eyes grew black with indignation and anger. Then, commanding his voice, he bent down to her very gently, as he did so laying his right hand protectingly over the timid hand on his arm.

"You need not fear, Miss Barclay," he said kindly, and smiled, looking down upon her. "Dick shall have the best of care when he reaches home. It is not probable that he is more than slightly injured." In his mind he believed that he was most seriously hurt, knowing what it usually meant for such a weak, deformed little creature to receive a blow of any kind, but he would not tell her his fear. "Are you, lad? And we know that your father is not like—this—when he lets liquor alone. Why should you apologize? Is it any fault of yours? Do not all your friends know what a brave life you lead? We have had proof enough, Dick and I!"

She shrank a little from him timidly as though she would not wound him; she also withdrew her hand from his arm and stepped back on the lower stair with Dick beside her pityingly.

"You are very kind," she said sweetly. "I thank you, Mr. Dean. If you will see that no harm comes to Dick it will be more than I

could ask! As for my life," she lifted her head proudly again, "we must answer for our own lives, Mr. Dean, and live them!"

She turned away with a parting smile for Dick and a shy inclination of her head to the man in the now open doorway, and mounting the stairs re-entered the room above while the outer door closed behind her friends.

"To dare touch her!" muttered the young man wrathfully.

CHAPTER XIII.

CONCLUSIVE ARGUMENT.

"That best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love."

—*Wordsworth.*

"SHE has no one to protect her," said Jim Dean to himself, "so I shall take it into my hands to see what can be done. It isn't safe for Dick to go there, and on his own account,—for he truly loves the girl,—I must do what I can."

He was sitting alone before the grate in the old-fashioned, homelike parlor, his mother and sister giving their care and attention to Dick, who by this time could not hide his suffering from the knowledge of his friends, though never one murmur of the pain he endured did he betray. The purple mark upon his shoulder told its own story, and the set, white face marked the suffering. He could not at first be coaxed into showing this mark, that it might be bathed and cared for, but, more than that, to have a physi-

cian or do more than they were doing; and for that night they would let him have his way; it was better so, Jim said, knowing through what excitement he had come.

It took some time to win even this point, and they knew that it was because of his thought for Anne that he shrank from exposing her father's cruelty, fearing that it might humiliate her in their thought. But who could fail to appreciate motherly Mrs. Dean, or resist Miss Nellie's bright eyes and coaxing voice? And Dick, in spite of his other thought, could not fail to know that it was pleasant to have such tender care.

"I've guessed a good deal how things were there," Jim Dean added in his self-communion, crossing his slippered feet upon the fender and frowning darkly upon the glowing fire. "I never really knew until to-night, but, knowing, I shall take such measures as to place out of possibility their ever again occurring. I rather think that I have enough influence with Barclay for that. It's a sin and shame for Barclay's daughter to lead such a life, and who is going to sit down and endure it?"

If he addressed the fire, the fire made no answer, but burned on brightly and steadily as though it understood that this was its one voca-

tion. But when Nellie Dean came down from Dick's room, leaving him in a broken sleep, her answer to his speech was sharp and sudden enough. There was no meekness about Miss Dean where wrong was in question. She was no stolid fire.

"It's just a wicked, wicked shame, Jim!" she said, with tears and anger in her eyes and voice as she paused beside him, one hand upon the back of his chair, her bright face touched into full relief by the fire. "To think of Anne Barclay being treated like that! The mark on Dick's shoulder was from no light blow, let me tell you, and I wish that that man could know what I think of him!"

"He shall know my opinion of him to-morrow," replied her brother quietly. "Sit down, Nell. How is the little fellow?"

"He is sleeping," said Nellie, softly now and with more tender eyes, as she seated herself, clasping her hands upon her knee, one small foot just touching the fender, she herself half buried in the large bamboo chair and cushions; "but not soundly, Jim. He starts and cries out something about Anne at the least disturbance in the room. It is enough to make one's heart ache to think how the poor little lad has been

schooled in sorrow. And Anne? No wonder that she has that beautiful calm upon her face, enduring so patiently such a life as hers."

"She shall endure it no longer than I can help," muttered her brother under his breath.

But she did not hear him, and as, at that moment, in answer to a ring at the bell, the neat servant girl announced "Dr. Benton," there was no further chance that evening to discuss this subject.

Jim Dean rose with evident pleasure to meet his guest, while charming Nellie could have offered him no more delightful welcome than with her bright eyes and dimples, her varying color and soft voice. And as Mrs. Dean also entered, with her usual quiet and undeniable assurance of pleasure at his presence, the young physician must have been most ungrateful not to have appreciated his welcome.

"It is such a cold night out of doors," he said, with a hint of embarrassment as he seated himself at one side of the fire near Mrs. Dean; "snowing rather sharply, too; I could not—or, more properly, would not—resist the temptation of stopping in for a glimpse at this cheery room and your happy selves, Mrs. Dean. Your home is so charming! I miss all such little feminine

touches as must go to make a truly home-like home in my bachelor quarters. You are to be envied, I assure you, Mr. Dean."

Young Dean laughed, raised his brows a trifle, and nodded.

"We are very fond of the little house," he replied easily. "Father gave it to mother as a wedding present. Just fit for a woman's ideal of housekeeping, you know. I rather think that we all would regret leaving it even to move into a larger house, Dr. Benton."

"I am sure that I should," said Miss Nellie positively, with a bright laugh. "It is so like one of the family, Dr. Benton."

"And one not to be parted from," answered Dr. Benton easily. "How is Dick to-night? No; thank you very kindly for your wish for me to remain; but our time is never our own, of course, you have discovered. I must go. I merely dropped in for a moment. I shall endeavor to look in upon him to-morrow, Mrs. Dean. In spite of the shock of his mother's death, he is perceptibly improving, and I am anxious for his strength to increase. Sleeping? That is well. Good-night. A pleasant memory I have to take with me to my home, Dean. Again, good-night."

When he had gone and the outer door had shut him into the night, they turned back to the fire; and all three were silent for a time afterward, following the same, and yet vastly different, lines of thought.

"They say that he is a very successful physician," Jim Dean remarked abruptly, as though they had been discussing this point. "In life there's nothing succeeds like success, mother, and I'll fight for my share."

The color that flushed his sister's face at this criticism might have been only the reflection of the fire, for all notice her brother took of it; but being conscious that she was blushing in such an unaccountable manner, she blushed harder than ever, until her cheeks were in a glow.

"After catching that draught of cold air and snow from the outer world when the door was opened, how very warm it is in here!" she said in the most ordinary tone. "Really, it is quite suffocating in here, Jim."

She arose and went over to one of the long windows opening upon the piazza, and stood there for a few moments, parting the drapery and gazing out upon the almost deserted avenue where the wind and snow were rioting with increasing violence.

And presently she quietly left the room, and went up to take a peep at Dick and bring down some dainty needlework to finish before prayers and bedtime came.

"I shall settle old Barclay in the morning," Jim Dean assured himself. "The storm will make no difference to him about going out to his cronies and gossip around some saloon fire. I can meet him easy enough. I will succeed for her sake—and Dick's."

And although the storm had abated and no snow fell, a pale glimmer of sunlight making the world weird with yellow light, young Dean waited, loitering, in spite of the sharp wind, near Anne's home until her father appeared.

Seeing him slouching out with unsteady limbs and trembling hands and sullen face, he hesitated about addressing him; but remembering that it was seldom this man was in any more favorable condition, and also recalling the scene of the previous night, and Dick's suffering that morning because of the cruel blow upon his shoulder, Dean rapidly lost this feeling of diffidence, and, crossing the street, linked his arm in the old man's arm, and addressed him.

"Good-morning, Mr. Barclay," he said.

"Oh, it's you," said the man gruffly, with a

lowering look under his heavy brows. "Al'ays a-meddlin' with other folks, Jim Dean. Al'ays meddlin' an' pert. I wonder 't you left Millard's, you had such a chance to sass back there when honest men come in for drinks as they'd 'a' paid for honest."

"Yes," replied the young man calmly, taking no notice of the last part of his remarks, something in his steady eyes and voice that caused the old man to shrink from him. "But I didn't come this morning to speak of myself, Barclay. I came to speak of you, and your daughter."

"And my daughter!" repeated Barclay irritably. "And my daughter! An' what of my daughter, Jim Dean? Folks has tried to meddle an' spoil her for the past months, an' I won't have——"

"That's just it," interrupted Dean quietly. "I won't have any more of such actions in relation to Miss Barclay as occurred last night, Barclay. Remember what I told you then, and remember this, too: Unless you change your mode of low, vagabond, helpless existence, and not suffer your daughter to work as she is doing for you, I shall have the law on you for a vagabond, and you know what that means when it's pretty well pushed. I'm not threatening you—I'm

only warning. Choose, and you may as well choose within the week; after that—well! I have seen more than I will endure again. Remember that!"

And Barclay stood, stunned, on the corner of the windy street staring stupidly after the manly figure disappearing among the crowd—never dreaming that his daughter would be artfully tried to prove her strength of principle: for Mrs. Millard, complaining of loneliness the evening after her daughter's wedding, decided to send for Anne Barclay to assist her in clearing the rooms.

"I want some young life about me," she said. "I must do something to drive out the blues; and I want some one who was fond of Minnie. You see, my dear Harry, Minnie was interested in her! Minnie had peculiar ideas, you know, regarding some things—too fine sensitiveness, too keen an appreciation of the suffering of others; and at such times she would have no one around her but this girl. She was so soothing, she said, so perfectly embodying peace!

"I intend to prove this for myself. I always liked the girl; she is not at all presuming and is perfectly ladylike—as it is to be hoped every one is, excepting that we know they are not,—

some people, I mean, of course—and I shall send the carriage for her to-morrow morning. She can assist me in many ways; Minnie's room is to be set in order and her things disposed of. If the girl is not too proud, there are many things which I should think would be acceptable to her."

This rather lengthy explanation was uttered as calmly and slowly as was usual with Mrs. Millard. Her face and voice betrayed no sign of inner sadness or loneliness; and had her husband not known her well he might have believed her lacking even motherly affection for her daughter. But understanding her pride and dislike of shallow effusiveness, he knew that her heart ached for the pretty, happy bride gone from the home.

He was very kind to her, knowing this, also. He smiled upon her, but not in amusement, as she calmly lay down, as she talked, the book which she had been reading, and kept her place with one graceful finger-tip. The paper which he had been reading rustled loudly as he half folded it upon his knee, the better to grant her his attention.

"I shall be pleased if there is anything you can do for Miss Barclay, Mary," he said, and

his pleasant voice possessed still deeper kindness. "I believe that she deserves the encouragement and assistance of every one; but I warn you that she is proud. Very proud. She will not accept charity, and if you would assist her you must do it in some other way than that.

"You look surprised at my knowledge of your pale little seamstress. My dear, in this room during Minnie's illness, when this girl came with an offering of flowers to prove her remembrance, I offered her any assistance in my power; I offered to obtain her father a remunerative position, that so they might be placed in better circumstances; I offered the little lame boy who was with her, a position also. Miss Barclay said, in her pride, that her father is in poor health and unable to work; there was nothing that I could do; she thanked me most prettily, but my effort fell rather flat. The boy too—I like the boy—with a queer, old-fashioned dignity informed me that he had work, had had it a long time—imagine it, Mary, when the little fellow was nothing but a mite!—and did not need my help! Old Barclay's an idle vagabond who does not wish to work, but so his daughter defended him! Talk about the pride of the

aristocracy! Look at them! It is quite use. less for you to offer them charity."

He smiled with great comprehension of the matter, crossing his slippered feet in self-satisfaction; but his wife only slightly shrugged her shoulders and elevated her brows.

"Perhaps you do not understand the art of offering charity," she said. "There are few will refuse if it is offered aright. Wait until after to-morrow, Harry."

And Harry Millard, although he believed that he knew how fine was the girl's pride, had learned from experience that silence in such matters was best, and he maintained it.

And upon the following day, shortly after Jim Dean parted from old Barclay on the corner of the street, the handsome carriage with its high-stepping black horses and liveried attendants, halted at Barclay's gate and the footman delivered his message to Anne at the door. She could easily arrange her work so that she could leave for the day, and knowing how lonely Mrs. Millard must be without her daughter, though it never occurred to her that the woman sent for her upon that account, she decided to go; and having already tidied the rooms she was ready to leave in a few minutes.

Her father's desire that she should have nothing to do with the Millards did not include such work as they might have for her to do, so she had no hesitation whatever in going. On her way home she would stop and see how Dick was. Mr. Dean said that he could not be injured much, but her heart trembled when she thought what might possibly be the truth.

Mrs. Millard welcomed her kindly, but in her usual proud manner, almost unconsciously impressing the fact of her wealth upon those beneath her socially. But Anne, if she noticed this, did not betray it.

"My daughter was pleased to have you about her when she was at home," said Mrs. Millard graciously; "so I sent for you, Anne, to help me about the house and to arrange Miss Minnie's wardrobe. She left so many of her things, her pretty dresses and laces and hats, because of her over-abundance in her wedding outfit! If you are like other girls, Anne—and most girls are alike to a certain degree in such matters—you will find it rather pleasant work with me to-day."

She smiled, and Anne smiled back upon her, but there was that subtle suggestion of pride about the latter that Mrs. Millard post-

poned for the time the offer of any present to Anne. Even her fine art of offering charity failed before the quiet seamstress.

They went about the house together; looked over and sorted Minnie's pretty gowns and laces and ribbons, the hundred and one things that a charming woman cultivates for her adornment; they talked of Minnie almost continually, Mrs. Millard telling and Anne listening to the details of the wedding, the guests, the gifts, the magnificent flowers, the dinner, and the pretty bride herself; how altogether sweet she was in her happiness and how very happy she was and must be, having chosen such a husband—"cultivated, wealthy, honorable!"

And Anne, listening, could not dispel from her memory Nellie Dean's whispered fear of a sad life for the one or the other because of that one weak principle that both possessed and neither recognized as fatal to their happiness. But, looking into the mother's proud face and catching the note of perfect satisfaction in her voice, silently commending her own care and wisdom, it was not Anne Barclay's way to darken such by any word of hers.

And by and by, when they had worked together a long time and both were fatigued, Mrs.

Millard ordered for Anne and herself a couple of glasses of wine.

"It will rest you and do you good; you need some such stimulant," said Mrs. Millard, offering Anne a glass.

The wine was red and sparkling—very pretty in the thin, crystal glass, but Anne gently refused.

"I thank you, Mrs. Millard; you are kind," she said; "but I could not accept it."

A half scornful smile stirred Mrs. Millard's lips. She knew that this girl's father was a drunkard, but drinking one glass when one was fatigued was worlds apart from the other mode of taking too much!

"Don't be foolish, Anne," she said; "I dislike fanaticism! As though I would offer you anything that could harm you! My daughter is no drunkard, and yet this was my custom with her when weak or ill. If it did not harm my daughter it cannot harm you. Come, Anne!" she added, unwilling to give this up as she was forced to give up her scheme of charitable assistance for the girl.

But Anne was firm. She lifted her clear eyes to Mrs. Millard's face as though pleading with her to comprehend the wrong that she would do, as she answered softly but very quietly:

"No, Mrs. Millard. Remembering my father, I could not!"

And some way in this as in her desire to offer charity, Mrs. Millard felt that the pale, still girl was above her; that her husband, after all, was right, and she, even in her pride, obliged to yield to force of circumstances; even then she would not acknowledge that it was purely principle and not a trace of stubborn fanaticism!

CHAPTER XIV.

LOVING DECEPTION.

"The one was little and feeble;
The other was straight and strong;
And the strong one helped the feeble one
Because the way was long."

AFTER office hours, starting out upon his round of calls, Dr. Benton drove up the avenue leading to the Deans' house upon that same morning. He was, from necessity, silent as he rode along, for he was alone; he seldom had his driver accompany him, as it was Dr. Benton's way to use the vacant seat beside him for some patient who needed exercise and air, and had not the way to provide such for himself.

Most often this place was given some young fellow eager for recovered health that he might return to his post of duty in business; or some man past the prime of life, who was grateful for this attention from a man who was himself young, enterprising, prosperous, who might so easily have forgotten him and his comfort. Sometimes he was accompanied by some white-

haired, gentle-faced woman, whose hands proved how her life had been spent in struggle for existence; sometimes some child was shown what seemed a bit of heaven, behind the chestnut horse, moving so easily and luxuriously along among the downy cushions of the carriage. But of them all, never a man in the younger years of his manhood. Either very young or very old.

But Dr. Benton was alone that morning as he drove briskly up the windy avenue, where the light fall of snow was already almost trodden out of sight under the hoofs and feet of street passengers; where wild gusts rioted and the yellowish glimmer of pale sunlight struck through long trails of streaky clouds from horizon to zenith, threatening storm.

Snow in the air, and bitter, biting weather; but the young physician's heart was warm as he rode along, and what was the weather to him? He shook the reins over the back of his horse, smiling as the thought occurred to him.

He made three professional calls on his way up the avenue before he came to the Deans'. In all these he was his attentive, careful self, that made him almost always among his patients a friend as well as physician, and that made

many of these patients watch with pleasure for his coming. One of the three was a widow whose little daughter was very ill with fever, whom the doctor was doing all in his power to save; they lived in a little house with a tiny lawn and huge trees around it, and were all in all to each other.

This was one of Dr. Benton's most trying cases, because the mother was so nearly distracted with grief and fear that her fits of hysteria and pleading with him to use the utmost extent of his power to save her darling, were exceedingly hard for him to endure with patience. But it was his patience that won their hearts as well as his sympathy, and they told him their cares and sorrows until, but for his happy temperament, his life must have been embittered by the sorrow about him.

The other two calls were of ordinary consequence, needing merely a simple prescription; and as the doctor drew the robe over his lap and took up the lines, driving away, he sighed unconsciously, as though some weight were lifted from his shoulders and he were free to breathe.

"If the little chap is able," he said to himself as he hurried his horse, "the ride will do him good in spite of the cold. He doesn't have

enough exercise. I should like to bring color into that pale face of his."

The chestnut horse tossed his head, champing his bit as though he would say that he understood and would do his best for the little chap.

Dr. Benton laughed. His spirits were lightening as he neared the pretty home set back from the street, with its tiny conservatory at one side resting the eyes of the passers-by with its blooming plants, its cosy parlor with the grate fire flickering defiance to any weather, and the assured warm welcome from the gentle mistress and pretty daughter.

"Yes, you are almost there, Damon," he said heartily, "and I'll not keep you standing long in the cold."

But when once inside it was hard to get away; doubly hard when there was a patient sorely needing careful attention. For he found that the hoped-for exercise for Dick was impossible; the boy was suffering intense pain from the heavy blow upon his shoulder; it had not only blackened the shoulder, but the cord had swelled rather alarmingly, and to attempt to lie down was most excruciating. He was sitting up in bed, pillowed high, when the doctor en-

tered, but turned his white face with a brave smile upon him.

"He's the dearest fellow!" murmured Miss Nellie, who had been sitting with the boy when the physician came, her bright eyes hinting of tears as she stood beside the bed, running her fingers lightly and caressingly through his hair. "Not one cross word or the least fault-finding, doctor. And we all know how much he has suffered through the night. We wanted to send for you, but he would not hear of it, and it so evidently worried him that we left it until you should come. It was such a wicked, wicked blow!"

Dr. Benton looked up quickly. He was carefully turning back one corner of the shirt from off the shoulder, exposing to view the black mark and swollen cord. A frown was deepening between his brows; his eyes were keen as he glanced up at Miss Nellie.

"So!" he said. "I thought that this was no injury from a fall. It's rather a bad-looking fellow, but we'll fix it up as comfortably as we can for now, and by and by it will grow better. How did it happen, Dick?"

Warm, indignant color was flushing Miss Dean's face, and her red lips parted as though

of themselves they would rehearse the cruel story.

Dr. Benton, seeing this eloquent face, shrewdly guessed of some unpleasant scene behind it, but could not believe that it was any cruelty from the hands of young Dean; but neither he nor Miss Nellie could utter their thought, with the boy's pale face and brave eyes and close-shut mouth, one trembling hand raised to silence them ere they could speak. There was a strange quivering across the whole face that came from mental rather than physical pain, at sight of which Miss Nellie bit her lip and was silent, and Dr. Benton gently bathed the bruised shoulder with a soothing lotion, after administering a quieting powder that should ease the sensation of suffering.

"A bad bruise, Dick," the doctor said gravely, keeping his eyes studiously away from the boy's face, lest he should think that he would by his gaze wrest the truth from him. "You'll keep the mark a long time, lad, but not the pain, I hope."

"It don't pain much," protested Dick eagerly, in his piping voice. "I don't 'special' mind the hurt, Dr. Benton. Often an' often I've had as much pain with my back. 'Tain't nice, but it gets better after a time. 'Tain't that I mind."

"No?" queried the physician gently, the strong, firm fingers bathing the bruise seeming by their simple magnetism to relieve the pain. "What is it you mind then, Dick lad?"

Miss Nellie, leaning tenderly beside the boy, started once more as though she would speak, but checked herself as the little fellow's great, grave, pleading eyes were instantly lifted to hers.

"I was a-thinkin' how it was done," said Dick very slowly, as though he were indeed deeply buried in some thought new to him, a flickering tinge of color in his cheeks, his one free hand restlessly pulling at the bed covering. "'Tain't nice to remember, Dr. Benton. Somethin' fell; I someway got in front of it an' was hurt. 'Tain't nobody's fault, truly—'tain't nobody's fault but mine."

"Well!" said Dr. Benton lightly and reassuringly. "If it's nobody's fault but yours, Dick, my lad, I should advise you to keep out of the way of such accidents in future. Many such blows might not end so well as this."

And Dick looked up swiftly, half fearing that with his usual keenness the physician had fathomed the cause of his hurt.

But, after leaving preparations for the boy and directions how to use them, the physician

stood for a moment in the lower hall, drawing on his gloves as he asked of Miss Nellie quite sternly if Dick were away yesterday.

And Miss Nellie, with this same swift rush of indignant color in her dimpled cheeks, knowing not what else to say, answered hesitatingly with the truth.

"He stayed with Miss Barclay until quite late, Dr. Benton. Jim went for him at night."

"Is Miss Barclay well?"

"Yes."

"How does her father get along? Was he at home, Miss Dean?"

And feeling the hot color in her cheeks at the impossibility of other answer, Miss Dean replied that he was at home, her face telling the rest.

And there was need of no further explanation of the injury to Dick.

And in the meantime, Mrs. Millard, annoyed and humiliated at Anne's firm refusal to take wine with her, lost considerable of her cordiality toward Anne as the day grew late and the hour approached for her to leave.

Anne noticed the change, and knew quite well the cause, and although she sincerely regretted having offended Minnie's mother—the woman who had always been kind to her,

she felt that she had done right; therefore she did what was in her power, by gentleness and thoughtful attention, to dispel this feeling.

Anne, with her sweetness of manner and calm, pale face, with her unassuming purity of thought and motive, almost invariably able to quiet angry thought or soften any hurt, found that she was powerless here.

Mrs. Millard was intensely proud, and although not so sensitive as her husband upon the subject of the use and abuse of liquor, yet it was not pleasant to learn from such a girl as Anne Barclay what were the effects of liquor and the threatened outcome of even a casual glass.

"To be lectured by such a person—a mere chit of a girl, and in her position—upon the right and wrong of the world!" thought Mrs. Millard as she watched Anne preparing to leave, with a feeling of relief that was strangely mingled with a sensation of uneasiness of conscience for which she could not account, but that made her still more proud and cold in manner toward the girl. "Pray, what would Harry say, if he knew?"

But as Harry was not there, and Anne was, Mrs. Millard made polite haste to be rid of her.

"I will ring for the carriage," she said, as

Anne was pinning on her hat and arranging a light veil about it to hold it in place, for the storm had come, and snow and wind were sweeping the streets. "It is not fit for you to walk to-night, Anne."

But Anne, turning smilingly from the mirror, shook her head.

"Oh, no," she said gently. "I would not have you do so, Mrs. Millard. I never mind storm, especially snow. I can take the cars part of the way, and, besides, I intend going up to Mrs. Dean's to see Dick before going home, and I would not have you bother."

Nevertheless, whether to soothe her conscience or because she felt that she had been unjust, Mrs. Millard made a faint effort to persuade her to wait for the carriage; whereat Anne still gently refused, assuring her that she did not in the least object to walking even in bad weather, having so little time for exercise. So Mrs. Millard allowed her to have her way, rather glad in her heart to be so easily rid of such an absurd fanatic, and pondering what she should say to her husband in extenuation of her defeat in her plan of charity.

"Girls are so ridiculously extreme when they are at all headstrong," she said to herself. And

then dismissed the girl and the subject together so far as such things are under human control. She paid Anne well for her day's assistance. What more could be expected of her?

But as Anne Barclay left the handsome house, a fierce gust of wind bursting around the corner of the piazza, laden with a dense shroud of snow, dashed upon her and almost tore the umbrella from her hands; she was not thinking of the harsh treatment she received from the mistress of this beautiful home; she was not even so much thinking of the mistress in any sense as of the daughter—the pretty, young bride—going out from under its roof, from the old home shelter with the fiery seeds of a destroying demon lurking in her blood, planted in her nature by her mother's hand and the example of both parents.

The scene in her memory vividly returned of the old church, with its deep, solemn shadows, and avenues of light from window to window across this darkness; of the crowd of guests and uninvited witnesses making the church alive with perfume and the soft rustle of beautiful costumes, and handsome faces; of the peal of bells from the high tower, and the swelling wedding march throbbing through arches and

aisles; of the pretty bride kneeling at the altar with the man of her choice and her parents' choice, while the grave words of the ceremony were uttered above them; of that one sifted line of rich red from the western window lightly lying upon the bride's bowed head like wine from a broken goblet, staining even the exquisite lace of her veil.

Could it be possible, Anne asked herself sadly, knowing the full sadness of the question, that the rich wine stain might in the future that looked only rose color to the bride, touch her heart to its grief? And any resentment that might have lain in her own heart against Mrs. Millard when she left the house was utterly driven out by this scarcely defined fear for the daughter and bride, as she stopped an uptown car and hastened on her way to Dick, to be assured with her own eyes that he truly was not injured by the effects of this same liquor in her father's blood.

Dick, with the thought of Anne always uppermost, was perfectly convinced that she would come to him in the course of the day, and insisted upon being dressed, or partly dressed, and allowed to sit up in a chair, that when she should come she could see for herself that there was

nothing much the matter with him. He was feverish and excited, and would not be put off.

His request was refused many times, for he was very weak and the slightest movement was accompanied with extreme pain ; but as the day wore on, and the boy's face grew more and more flushed and wistful and his pulse beat high with feverish anxiety, Miss Nellie, his self-appointed nurse, with her tender heart could no longer endure his pleading, and writing a dainty, troubled note upon the prettiest of scented paper, she sent the little maid-servant with it to Dr. Benton, asking his advice.

And Dr. Benton, smiling as he read the beseeching little note of appeal, sent in reply a grave, strong, comforting letter, telling Miss Dean that if she and her mother considered it wise from what they saw of the boy's condition to let him have his way, they had perhaps better yield to his desire, but to do so only when Miss Barclay had arrived, one or the other detaining her in the parlor while the patient was being made ready to receive her. And as this kind letter ended with the promise that the physician would call in later in the evening, when Miss Barclay would have come and gone if she were coming, in order to know Dick's condition after

the interview, Miss Dean was greatly relieved, and at once assured Dick that he should have his way when Anne came.

The stormy day was fading slowly into twilight in a ghostly fashion, the snowflakes, blown about, filling the air and beating against window and door, when at last Anne came. Mrs. Dean was in the cheery parlor to receive her when the little servant announced that she had arrived, and Miss Nellie was with Dick waiting to prepare him as soon as she should be assured that Anne had come. After she arrived there was a quiet bustle in the boy's room for a few minutes, as with the maid's assistance Nellie made Dick comfortable among the cushions piled in the steamer chair that had been converted deftly into an invalid chair ; and he was sitting quite like his old self, with the bright bits of paper in his lap and faint, excited color in his cheeks, and with shining eyes when Anne came in.

Miss Dean went down for Miss Barclay when all was prepared, saying quite naturally, as a matter of course, that Dr. Benton was keeping Dick very quiet, as he had some plan by which he hoped to benefit him, and that was why she took Miss Barclay up to him instead of having him down to see her. And as the boy was

really looking remarkably well, with the color in his cheeks and those bright eyes, even though his lips were hot as though with fever when she bent to kiss him, why should Anne not believe Miss Dean's explanation for his keeping his room? And lest she should fear some harm in spite of all this evidence to the contrary, did the brave, loving lad not move his left hand painfully among the bright papers to show her that there could be nothing wrong, keeping down by a struggle the cry of pain that rose to his lips and almost betrayed him to her searching eyes?

She could stay only for a moment, she told him; she just ran in on her way from Mrs. Millard's to see if he were all right; she must hurry home to prepare her father's dinner, a flush mounting her face at mentioning his name.

And when she was gone they put him tenderly to bed, tears in Miss Nellie's eyes for his suffering; and when the physician came he found the lad in a raging fever and delirious, and would not leave him, but remained with him through the night, watching him most tenderly as a brother might, with Miss Nellie in the next room ready to render him assistance if necessary, and the entire household ready to do what they could for the brave, affectionate boy.

CHAPTER XV.

THROUGH THE SNOW.

"Confidence is a plant of slow growth in an aged bosom."
—*William Pitt.*

As Anne left the Deans her heart was much lighter regarding Dick than when she was hurrying to see him. She had seen with her own eyes that the boy was comfortable; that he had about him everything that he could desire; that his friends gave him most kind, most tender care; there was color in the usually pale face, and the great grave eyes were bright. Both Mrs. Dean and Miss Nellie had assured her that he was doing finely; that even the physician spoke of his improved appearance only the previous night, and that he was the best little fellow in the city.

This warm praise from his friends and Dick's own eager assurance that he was all right and very happy should have satisfied her, but strangely enough it did not. There was a restless feeling

of certainty in her heart that her father must have injured the boy ; she knew the force of his angry arm and how heavy the hand could be when it struck. The lad was weak from his deformity ; weak from his hard, scant life ; weak from years of suffering ; how could he have escaped without some great, some intense suffering ?

Her heart was heavy in spite of what she had seen and heard in the pretty home she just left, and she lingered for a moment on the steps as though she could not go and leave the lad.

With every added moment of the late afternoon the storm increased, and as Anne paused on the steps the wind and snow were howling fiercely around her, tearing at her gossamer, beating down her umbrella, striking her madly in the face and, like rioters, heedless of all things in its licensed recklessness. It was a bitter night for any one to be upon the streets, and hurriedly running down the steps and along the walk as a car came in sight, regardless of her uncovered head, as she found it impossible to raise her umbrella, Anne lingered no longer, remembering that her father would soon be at home needing a warm fire and light and comfort then if ever he would.

She left Dick in good hands; she could do nothing for him; she must attend to her duty at home.

It was too far to think of walking home in that storm and with her father likely to come at any moment; so she boarded the car and was glad to be sheltered even in that way from the fury of the storm. It was a terrible storm indeed. The night would not be utterly dark with that ghostly sheet of snow, to be sure, in spite of the black heavens; and the street lamps began to glow and flare against the blasts when Anne alighted from the car. She still had four blocks to walk to her home, and she shivered as she kept tight hold of her umbrella, lest it be wrenched from her hand by the violent wind that made it impossible to raise it for protection.

"It is dreadful!" said Anne, trying to button her coat closer about her throat with one hand, only to be obliged to grasp her hat to keep it on, and pause a moment to hold her footing. "If ever father will need a good, warm fire and a hot dinner, he will to-night."

And stopping in a market on her way, she bought a few things that she hoped would please him, and hurried on to prepare them

against his coming. She had no thought that he might be there before her. He never had been. Since his wife died—he led a comparatively good life up to that time and worked for her and their daughter—he had drifted among loose companions with loose consciences, whose sole aim in life seemed to be to have enough to eat and drink and gossip about; and his daughter as she grew older was obliged to work for them both.

Perhaps the sight of her pale face bent over the endless sewing that was meat and drink and shelter to them, was more than even he could bear; certain it is that he went out from home as soon as he ate his breakfast in the morning and did not return until dark. So Anne did not think of his arriving at home first and having to wait on the stairs for her return, as the door was locked and she had the key.

She no more thought of his being at home before her than she thought of stumbling upon the man whom she stumbled upon at the next corner! She was hurrying through the blinding snow with her head down, keeping fast hold of her packages and umbrella, when she almost ran into the arms of some one coming toward her.

Lifting her head with a soft apology for the

accident, she was surprised and somewhat confused to find that this was Mr. Dean.

"Miss Barclay!" he exclaimed in surprise, as though he had had no thought of seeing her, instead of going that way purposely to look up at her window where the light always shone after dusk like a beacon, and also to watch if her father returned sober; and seeing no light in the window, knew that she was away, but must shortly return, as she never kept her father waiting; and had waited to see that she returned safely, himself unseen.

"Such a terrible night!" said Anne, pausing only a moment to regain composure. She would not question why he was there for she feared his reply. "I have just come from Dick. I am glad he is doing so nicely and has such kind friends, Mr. Dean! He seems very happy."

He had turned at once, walking with her, taking the packages and umbrella from her arms and drawing one soft hand firmly through his arm, shielding her as best he could from the hurling gusts as they swept around them. There were few foot passengers upon the streets, and such as there were, were hurrying like themselves to reach the shelter of home.

"Surely," exclaimed Dean, bending his head

lower to reach her height, "you have not walked from my home down here in this terrible storm, Miss Barclay! How could my mother have allowed you to do it—how could you do it!"

"But I didn't do it," replied Anne. They were passing a street lamp and she lifted her face to him, answering, in spite of the storm.

He started, looking at her. The sharp air, the driving snow and winds had beaten warm color into the usually pale cheeks; her eyes were bright; her lips, too, were red as though new life had come to her that night through the storm. He had not dreamed that she could be so beautiful. The purity and sweetness of her face made her lovely in all eyes; but to-night, lifting her face to him, with the snow and winds beating upon it, she was more than lovely, she was very beautiful.

It was only a passing glimpse of what she was capable under different and happier circumstances; the lamp was behind them and they were turning down the narrow street to her home, she clinging half timidly to him, he bending to her; but it was a glimpse that remained with him, as a photograph is taken in an instant with a flash of reflected light.

They were silent after her swift denial until

he had taken the key from her and opened the outer door. The light in the hall was none of the brightest, but coming from the outer darkness and riot of wind and snow even this faint light was rather blinding. Neither for the moment saw the man upon the stairs.

"Thank you; no; I will not go in to-night," said Dean in answer to her hesitating invitation for him to enter. "If you are certain that you will have no difficulty in opening the inner door I will leave you now, Miss Barclay. Good-night." He hesitated an instant as she stood with the packages in her arms as he had carefully placed them, a vision of true womanhood, and then, still with his head uncovered, standing before her, he added: "And God bless you!"

Then the door was shut, and he was gone, and the storm shrieked derisively, beating against the house. While Anne, feeling the unusual touch of tears in her eyes, turned hastily up the stairs, only then seeing the man awaiting her on the landing above.

"Father!" she said softly, surprise, regret, and fear in her voice. "I never imagined that it was so late! I am so sorry to have kept you waiting."

But he only answered gruffly:

"Then hurry and open the door, will you? Less said the better!"

His voice was steady if rough, and the absence of stale tobacco-smoke and liquor that was usually upon him proved also to Anne's quick perception that he was sober. It was the first time since he had fallen into the bad habit, and Anne could scarcely believe the evidence of her senses. Her hand trembled as she set the key in the lock and opened the door.

Anne hurriedly placed her packages on the table, and after lighting the lamp and drawing the curtains, the hall door still standing open, her father upon the landing, she called him in, going to the door and reaching out her hand.

"Come, father," she said.

It was Anne's old gentle, pitying voice, but the man upon the landing seemed to shrink into himself at sight of her face in its bright glow of color. Perhaps the sight brought back the memory of that time when his wife and Anne, a bright-faced child, looked to him for their good and did not look in vain. When he won the respect of all and did not stand in need of his daughter's support. It was bitter to think how he had retrograded in the social scale,

in the eyes of his friends, in his own eyes, and even in the eyes of this slender girl who alone was loyal to him.

To be threatened as young Dean threatened him that morning, was humiliating; at first he was too much astonished to offer indignant self-vindication; when he realized what it meant he was furiously angry and returned muttered threat for each threat; afterward when his wrath had somewhat fallen, in spite of his pride, his boasted self-respect, in spite of the dulled edge of his manliness, his lost—and wasted—years, he saw what he must be to others.

It was bitter, biting, maddening even to his degraded sense of justice. He had had his eyes rudely opened and he had himself to examine, debase, and judge. He was possessed with unsatisfying restlessness; in spite of the raw day he walked and walked, down this street and that, up and across; past saloons without number, with their reckless devotees and enticing murmur of voiccs and swinging doors so easy to open and that swung back upon one entering very quickly unless he were upon the lookout.

The raw wind increased, the snow came down at first in spurts of hard ice points, afterward gathering in drifts of sweeping white; and still

he walked and walked, not thinking of fatigue or hunger with that wakened fire of old hopes, old ambitions, old promises fallen to fiery ashes upon his wasted years of idleness, neglect, and debauchery.

He did not yield to conscience without a struggle; he had for so long been accustomed to drown thought that with all his remaining mental strength he sought to drown it now; but at Dean's words it had lifted like a mad river above its walls and would not be kept down by such feeble strength as a drunkard's trembling hands.

He stood accused and judged by himself! But why should he yield to that young fellow? Who was Jim Dean that he should rise for his humiliation in defence of his daughter? Had he not himself encouraged the use of liquor, and with his own hands passed the glasses across the bar to those who bought? He was not a bartender now, to be sure, but he had been one. Should he let him lay down the law to him, John Barclay, and accept his terms meekly? Not he—not he, indeed! And yet, as so he argued angrily, the truth stood distinctly before him in the midst of the snow like some immovable ghost to his distorted vision.

No matter what Jim Dean was, he had set John Barclay before himself as he was; and John Barclay wrestled with his good angel and would not yield, and could not conquer.

As the day grew late and the storm increased in fury, Barclay went home, passing his old haunts sullenly yet driven by some power past entering, or looking in lest he be tempted. It was no noble resolution to resist temptation that carried him safely by; it was some invisible force within him, good and evil struggling together, that lifted his mental power above his physical craving. He dared not yet defy Dean's power—for that he held such power over him he was well assured—neither would he yield to it.

When he reached home Anne had not arrived and he was obliged to wait in the hall for her to come; but the struggle within him deadened other sensations and other thought, and he sat down sullenly enough but quietly upon the landing to wait for her. He saw her enter; saw that young Dean was with her; felt a thrill of anger along his blood that his accuser should protect his daughter; and still that fine, silent, inward struggle kept him silent.

All this passed flash-like through his memory

as Anne stood with her outstretched hand in the doorway calling him to enter.

"I stopped to get a few things for dinner, father," she said sweetly. "That hindered me. I am sorry that I kept you waiting."

She had never before kept him waiting! He knew that, too, in this strange self-search. But he made her no reply. He arose slowly and indifferently, and with heavily drawn brows entered the room, worn and haggard in the light of the lamp.

Anne noted this in her swift glance as he passed her, setting aside her hand, and she also saw that he was sober and her heart lifted lightly in thankfulness. He had been under the influence of liquor more or less every day for the last five years. Was that to be a red-letter day in her life?

The color remained in her face as she made the fire and set the kettle over that soon sang merrily, and broiled the bit of steak and mashed potatoes to a cream, and poured the rich hot milk over the oysters to make them plump and tender. She was unaccountably happy doing all these little domestic things, in spite of that subtle fear for Dick that had lain in her heart since she left him that afternoon.

And could she have known how the brave little lad was suffering would her heart have been so light or the color so warm in her face? And when, upon the following morning Barclay did not, as was his habit, dress, and eat his breakfast and go out, Anne's heart began to beat more steadily. It must be true, she told herself, that something had changed him; could it be remorse for having struck Dick? He had never before laid his hand upon the lad; he had been harsh with her in his presence, but had never lifted his hand against Dick.

It was late when Barclay dressed and came out, drawing a chair to the stove and crouching over it, watching the bright thread of fire through the opened door, his back turned upon his daughter, deigning her no word of recognition or reply when she addressed him, save that he desired no breakfast.

For that inner fight would neither conquer nor be conquered, and the man was sullen and angry under its goading influence. But toward the middle of the afternoon, as the storm abated and the wind lulled, though still that other storm raged in Barclay's breast, he put on his outer coat and hat, muffling his throat well up in a woollen scarf, and went out, muttering some

unintelligible reply to her query as to whether he would return before dark or not; and slamming the door behind him as though he hoped to shut in those mad thoughts that would not down, he went away and was seen no more until darkness had long settled upon the earth.

But as he came stumbling up the stairs and into the room, Anne shrank down in her chair, her hands crushed over her sewing, her heart for an instant ceasing its wild beating and then throbbed on heavily like lead in her breast.

For her father was too drunk even to recognize her or his surroundings, but fell in a heap upon the floor just within the room.

During all that night Nellie Dean watched near the doctor, resolutely maintaining her position in an upright, hard chair that she might have no fear of sleeping when needed.

Her brother laughed at her when he came up-stairs after prayers, to see that she was made comfortable for her unusual vigil, and discovered her manner of wooing wakefulness; and there was a gleam of intense appreciation of the situation even in the physician's eyes when Jim confided this state of things to him; but the mother defended the pretty girl-woman anxious to be true to her duty.

"I am certain that I should go straight to sleep," said Miss Nellie decisively in answer to her brother's laughter, "if I should lie down on the couch or even sit in a cushioned chair; and I just simply mustn't go to sleep, Mr. Bear!"

"I trust that there will be no necessity for me to call you, Miss Dean," said Dr. Benton gravely, in spite of those mischievous eyes, when Dean summoned him to the door to learn of his sister's absurdity.

"And so do I," replied Miss Nellie, her bright eyes growing very wistful and pleading as though she would not have him laugh at her wish to be true to her trust; "but suppose that Dick should be worse or should ask for me in the night and I should not wake, how badly I should feel, Dr. Benton!"

"Yes," said Dr. Benton quietly, the laughter gone from his eyes, superseded by another light that she could not meet so carelessly; "you are right, Miss Dean. Our little lad is very sick and may need the care of us both before morning. We hope not, but only a Higher Power knows!"

And with this authoritative defender on her side, even Miss Nellie's tormenting brother did not attempt further to tease her that night, and

for that Miss Nellie placed Dr. Benton high in her thoughts, assuring herself that she must be truly almost a woman to be so trusted by such a man, and not merely a thoughtless girl as her brother averred.

So she settled herself in the straight-backed, uncushioned chair beside the lamp-stand, with a book to read, and plenty of thoughts pleasant and otherwise, to keep her awake after her mother retired to her own room further down the hall as the hour of midnight struck; movements and mutterings from the sick-room, but no call as yet for the pretty volunteer nurse.

And Jim Dean, keeping vigil in the parlor beside the fire until the small hours of morning, even until dawn, went over and over the events of the day, the storm rioting without, seeming to challenge him in derision to forget, if he could, the pretty vision of bright eyes and red cheeks and lips revealed to him under the lamp at the street corner that night, or forget the new life in the face turned to him from the staircase as last he saw it. He wondered, too, what had been the effect of his threat against Barclay. He believed that the man was too much of a coward not to heed his words, but

he was still perhaps bully enough to go even beyond his usual bounds—for a time.

He had seen a good deal of Barclay during his stay behind the bar at Millard's saloon, and he believed him to be almost beyond the hope of benefiting; it was the knowledge of this man's life, also, that helped to strengthen the pleading of his mother and sister against his employment; and the thought of Barclay's daughter in her quiet nobility fighting against the harshness of her life that at last set Jim Dean's face toward a higher and better light.

He told Millard frankly his reasons for leaving his position before he went away, and wakened more than ever this man's conscience regarding this honorable business of his. Whether or not his quiet words had at all affected Millard, however, he did not know, any more than he knew, sitting before the parlor fire, whether Barclay had heeded his words or had defied them. The scene in Barclay's house upon the previous night also returned vividly to his mind, and sleep was far from his eyes, until dawn colored the east and the mighty tumult of nature grew less violent as the soft gray touched the heavens.

All night Dr. Benton kept faithful watch

over the little sufferer among the pillows, lifting the restless, fevered head upon his arm as tenderly as a mother might, to hold the glass of water to the parched lips, or turn and smooth the crushed pillows, or gently bathe the black mark on his shoulder, or prepare the powder that should lessen the sense of pain; and sometimes he would murmur words of comfort in his quiet, soothing voice; sometimes words with higher meaning that seemed, either the words or the voice, to hush the muttered delirium.

And Nellie Dean had sat in the hard, uncushioned chair resolutely reading from the book she held, or busy with her thoughts, but with new and hitherto unknown determination, banishing sleep lest Dick should call her and she should not hear.

The sensation was quite new to her, light-hearted girl as she had always been, and it was very solemn to listen to and wait almost eagerly for those numerous small sounds of the night that the day's noise and bustle utterly drown; to feel that one sits alone at midnight waiting a call from a sick-room; to know that the extremity of illness is such that only God can tell what the end will be!

That one night in Nellie Dean's life was one that she never forgot, every hour of which added to her character. She knew, and all the anxious watchers in the house knew, that the blow was from the heavy hand of Barclay under the influence of liquor; that to a boy who was strong and well, the blow, although heavy, would have done no more than bruise him and lame the arm for a while; to Dick in his weakness and sensitiveness the blow was such as might end in death! For to this boy with his pain-strung nerves and fine sensibilities the shock upon his nervous system exceeded the physical pain arising from added physical disorder.

And so, with anxious watch by all in the house, fearful what each hour might bring, the mad tempest still raging, the night gave way to gray dawn, and dawn to day, and death had not come; only intense suffering and anxious hearts.

And when day had come and life still throbbed through Dick's fevered veins, sleep coming to him as dawn approached, the physician went down to meet the family and tell them his opinion. Undoubtedly, now sleep had come, he said, the boy would sleep for hours; if he grew

restless or threatened to relapse into delirium, such and such medicine should be administered; quietness throughout the house must be maintained, and continual watch kept over the patient.

"He is in a very critical condition," he answered to Mrs. Dean's anxious query; "but I hope to pull him through with the aid of you ladies. I shall look in at noon and come back after office hours this evening for the night, unless he is improved. I trust that he may be."

This wish was echoed in the hearts of all, for Dick had won a warm hold upon their hearts, perhaps in each thought strengthened by a prayer for the wise ending that only heaven knew!

And it was decided that Anne should not be told unless there were imminent danger or Dick fretted for her. But on his way down-town that morning Jim Dean left the car and waited long after the usual hour for Barclay's start out for the day, in spite of the blustering storm that had not entirely died; but no Barclay came; and when he had grown weary and the hour was late for his attendance at the store, he went away considerably puzzled to know whether or not Barclay had turned bully or had acted upon his advice.

"I won't tell him, either, of the danger to Dick's life unless I have to manage him," he said to himself, on his way down-town. "But I'll keep it over his head to use if necessary. It may prove a wholesome lesson yet!"

CHAPTER XVI.

IN THE BALANCE.

"Beware of desperate steps. The darkest day,
Live till to-morrow, will have passed away."
—*Cowper.*

When Dr. Benton had gone away after the night of fever and delirium, Dick slept quietly for a couple of hours; then he grew restless, turned his head to and fro uneasily upon the pillows, and muttered incoherently now and then as though he were sadly troubled; and by the time the physician called at noon he found the patient decidedly worse.

He frowned as he watched the uneasy head, sitting beside the bed, his fingers lightly touching the hot, rapid pulse. He had hoped and believed from the boy's quiet sleep when he left that morning to find him improved upon this noon call. He was disappointed when he found him worse, and had grave apprehensions of being, after all, unable to bring him through the fever.

With a professional man's admiration of his

profession, he had hoped that he might by careful means improve the boy's condition physically, and grant him a happy life; for no life can be thoroughly complete or come to full fruition without health. Now, watching the boy, listening to his murmuring, comprehending with fine sense that tell-tale message of the blood along the pulse, he believed that all his plans, and the plans of these people for the lad, would amount to nothing but a promising life ended and a son swiftly following his mother into the Great Silence.

Mrs. Dean was in the room, Miss Nellie having been sent to lie down and rest; and with her knowledge of sickness and the signs in a physician's face, she read the truth of his fear in the fine, kind face so intently turned to the fever-flushed face among the pillows. Her face betrayed her knowledge of his fear as Dr. Benton lifted his eyes to hers, closing his watch and replacing it in his pocket as he gently laid the thin wrist back upon the coverlet.

"Is it so bad as that, doctor?" she asked, very softly, the delicate shadow upon her face, her calm blue eyes stirred with a touch of tears. 'Is there nothing we can do to assist you in

bringing him back to us? Would it be well to have a regular nurse, rather than such willing but untrained help as we can give? We must do all that we can to restore the little fellow."

"It would be well to have a trained nurse, certainly," he replied slowly, the frown of deep thought still upon his brows. "I can send you one if you desire it, Mrs. Dean—a strong, quiet, capable young person, upon whom you may rely. It has come to such a pass with Dick that twelve hours must decide which way the balance will dip. Had he ordinary strength to fall back upon I should be more confident, but he has so little strength that the excitement of his mother's death, besides what occurred the other evening to bring on the fever, that his nervous system is unstrung. We may bring him through, however; we must certainly do what we can, and after all he may have more rallying power than I know. We must hope for the best, Mrs. Dean, and trust in God."

He did not speak in a vain boast as some men might, using religion as a cloak for lack of knowledge or skill; he spoke quietly and reverently, and Mrs. Dean bowed her head in acquiescence, her silent prayer for the small lad before them mingled with the wish that some

day her son, her only boy, would prove so unmistakably as this man did what help and hope came to him at thought of the Higher Power!

"I would remain here with him if I could," added Dr. Benton, presently breaking the silence that he had allowed to fall between them; "but that is impossible, Mrs. Dean. I will change Dick's medicine, and send a nurse this afternoon. It is not right that you or your daughter should be broken of your rest again as you were last night. I trust that Miss Dean feels no bad effects from it?"

He had risen, having done all that he could for Dick in the way of ascertaining his condition and changing his medicine to meet the more urgent need, and was drawing on his gloves, still anxiously watching the boy among the pillows of the bed as he kept up that constant murmur and uneasy motion of his head.

Mrs. Dean also arose, after touching a bell cord at her side.

"Nellie is well," she replied, half smiling at the mere mention of the happy girl. "She is almost always well, doctor. We keep her free from care and the knowledge of pain as much as we can, and insist upon plenty of exercise,

food, and sleep. One night's broken rest could not harm her perfect constitution."

The physician smiled. That mischievous gleam again awoke in his eyes, remembering the girl's unique design for wakefulness upon the previous night and her utter disregard of their amusement at her expense.

"Those are the three great factors of a free, full life, Mrs. Dean," he said. "I would give a great deal could some one tell me as much in regard to Dick. I should then have so much more hope of him."

As at that moment the neat servant appeared at the door in answer to Mrs. Dean's ring, the doctor buttoned his gloves in silence.

Mrs. Dean turned to the servant.

"Tell Miss Nellie that Dr. Benton is going, Elida," she said. And as the servant obediently disappeared she added: "My daughter wishes to speak with you before you leave, doctor. Just a word or two for her comfort, I think, if you can spare the time."

But although he murmured that it would give him great pleasure to grant her request, his face was as quiet and unmoved as usual; and as he left the room, glancing back at the flushed boy face, Mrs. Dean, alone with the sick lad, stood

for a moment beside the bed, her hands clasped as though she prayed silently for him and for the peace of God to rest upon all troubled hearts.

And as the young physician ran lightly, almost noiselessly, down the softly-carpeted stairs, Miss Nellie parted the portierres at the parlor doorway and stood so framed, a charming picture of shadowed brightness, waiting for him to come.

He saw her with those keen eyes of his even before he betrayed that he knew of her presence. She was not one to easily pass unnoticed.

She came forward as he reached the lower hall, some of the pretty color gone from her cheeks though her eyes were still bright and brave, looking up to him. In some indefinable manner a shadow had fallen upon the young face that made it still more womanly and attractive.

"Doctor," she said, just the smallest trace of shy hesitation in her voice and manner, "how is Dick? He slept some time this morning, but it seems to me that he has grown worse since he half waked. The poor little brave fellow! He is so brave, doctor!"

A flashing smile crossed her face and leaped in her eyes as she faced him, waiting for his answer.

When he had answered her as best he could, not knowing himself what the issue would be, and the gravity falling over the piquant face wakened regret in his heart that such glad young natures must wake to sorrow, she seemed to lose all her hesitation and indecision.

"Dr. Benton," she said steadily, a little, queer line of sternness upon her lips, "if anything should happen that Dick should not recover, it will be from the effect of the blow he received the other night?"

He looked at her in some surprise, as he answered:

"Yes, Miss Dean."

"And the fever was caused by this blow, and he would not have had it but for that, Dr. Benton?"

Again he replied in the affirmative, only moderating his answer to the knowledge of the fever; he could not, of course, positively assert that the boy would not have had a fever from the excitement through which he had recently passed, but in all probability he would not.

"Then," he realized now her object in asking so eagerly her questions, "if anything does happen that Dick does not recover, can they hold responsible the person who struck him?"

Very grave and gentle his voice was now, answering her, his hand for one moment touching her arm.

"Undoubtedly they can—and will, Miss Dean," he replied.

She caught her breath, and her eyes widened with fear. She had not dared give speech to this thought before, fearing the reply. She did not faint, she did not cry out, but she lifted her face in his sight, and it was a pallid face, as she said hoarsely but steadily:

"Then, please God, Anne does not hear of it unless she must! I think that the knowledge would kill her!"

"We will hope for the best," he said gently, wishing that it were in his power to comfort her. "More remarkable recoveries than this have been effected, Miss Dean; and in any case, from what I know of Miss Barclay there is small fear for her even should the worst come to pass. She has wonderful self-command."

Still, the balance hung pretty even for the next twelve hours in Dick Chester's life. A trained nurse was sent for that afternoon according to Dr. Benton's promise, and all that was possible was done for the little sufferer. The nurse was a quiet, pleasant-faced young

woman, and entered at once upon her duties as though she had passed all her life in that pretty little home and knew its ways completely ; and her perfect composure and thorough understanding of her duties very soon told in the more comfortable position of the patient, the less frequent mutterings of delirium, and the orderliness of the room, although still the fever burned through the young blood.

Miss Nellie liked her at once ; she was quick in her judgment of character, and the woman's face pleased her greatly.

"She'll cure Dick if any one can," she said enthusiastically to her mother. "I never saw any one like her, mamma. She knows just every single thing to do, and the little fellow is better already—I know he is better, mamma Dean!"

"I hope that he is, dear," said Mrs. Dean, herself not so assured, remembering the physician's troubled face. "But you must give some credit to the doctor's care and attention, Nellie. He certainly could have done no more had Dick been of his own kindred."

Miss Nellie nodded obediently.

"Of course. But I am sure that the nurse will help him, mamma. I knew nothing about

nursing, and you could not be with him all the time as one should be to take the proper care."

By and by she added slowly, her thoughts evidently with the subject of her words:

"All that I hope now is that Anne will not come here until the best or worst is known. In Dick's present undecided state—and she could not look at him without knowing that it is serious—I believe it would nearly drive her mad to see him and know the truth of what must come to her father should the boy die! It 's terrible anyway, mamma, but Anne is so brave and has tried so hard and faithfully to defend and encourage him."

"It is not probable that she will come to-day," said Mrs. Dean comfortingly; "it is too bitter a day for any one to venture out who need not. Anne does not imagine that Dick is so ill, and she has too much common sense to come out in this storm when, so far as she knows, another day would do as well."

"Yes," assented Nellie thoughtfully; "but I hope that it will stay stormy until we know positively about Dick. Twelve hours, Dr. Benton said. That will be some time to-morrow. I wish that to-morrow would come!"

It was a childish, impulsive wish natural to

the girl, but Mrs. Dean silenced her with unusual sternness.

"To-morrow comes swiftly enough, Nellie," she said. They were sewing in Mrs. Dean's room and Nellie bent her head still lower over her needle. "Each added day brings added joy or pain to some one; let the days come as the Lord wills, my dear."

"I was thinking of Anne, mamma," said Nellie softly, with shyly lifted eyes. "I wished for Anne."

"And perhaps to Anne it might bring only added sorrow; let us wait, dear!" was the gentle remonstrance.

But the hours went very slowly, and would Anne have believed at that moment that there could be added sorrow or humiliation for her? Had she not been light-hearted—strangely light-hearted since the previous night, with her father home, sober? Had she not been buoyed up all day with the hope, growing momentarily stronger, that there might be a pleasant home and happy hours for them yet, as there were for others?

She had even been foolishly humming a song over her sewing, looking out now and then at the falling snow and the busy sweepers clearing

the streets as fast as the white covering fell. And here it had ended in—this! A man, lost to all manliness, all pride, all self-respect, in the fumes of liquor lying before her—her father—in a heap upon the floor!

Every day for five years he had come home more or less under the influence of liquor, then had come yesterday with not a drop passing his lips, and then fell this worst evil of all!

Her sewing fell from her hands to her lap and so shifted by little and little to the floor unnoticed by her. Her eyes widened, her lips quivered for an instant; then the old pallor and calm returned. She rose and went toward him.

He was too intoxicated to see or hear what was passing around him, and did not know that his daughter stood for a long time with clasped hands and calm, pale face, looking down upon him. Then she stooped and attempted to lift him, to get him upon his bed in the inner room, but he was too heavy for her slim arms and slender strength; and bringing out a pillow she laid it as comfortably as she could beneath his head, upon which he muttered a half audible malediction upon her and turned his head away. His hat had fallen off and she hung it upon its nail on the wall.

"May the Lord be merciful!" she murmured half brokenly, as she shaded his eyes from the light and resumed her sewing. She could touch nothing upon the neatly set table. Under the swift revulsion of feeling the sight of food sickened her. She had hoped so much, foolishly perhaps, but with youth's ever ready faith in future good; and only this had come!

All night long she sat in her little sewing-chair beside the sewing-table busily at work, for she could find no rest should she go to bed, and she must keep watch that no harm came to either during her father's drunken sleep. He might rouse at any moment, and after such a debauch his temper would be terrible. She trembled, thinking of it, and yet she was brave.

But would she have been so brave or have had even her little peace of mind had she known of that other vigil over the lad who was possibly hurt to death in the drunken rage of the man before her? The hours of the night, going so swiftly and yet to anxious hearts lagging upon their way, went by, one by one, as steadily and surely as though two watchers kept no guard over two vastly different lives! One, that might possibly—would probably, the physician said—end in death; one, lost to the mo-

ment's life by the willful use of death's most subtle weapon! Two, both women, tireless in their vigilance and yet so different!

More than once the quiet nurse in the happier home would have had them send for any friend whom the little lad might wish to see, and once Jim Dean even had his overcoat on ready to go out for Anne; but Nellie pleaded so earnestly for them to wait until they knew past any doubting that there was no hope, urging upon her mother and brother the fact that the truth would surely kill Anne, no matter how brave she was; and Nellie's eyes, with tears brimming upon the lashes, were very soft and wistful, and Nellie's face in its loving thought of Anne was so very eloquent that Jim did not go, but waited as she wished until there could be no longer any hope!

So the hours went by and the lad's lips grew too weak for murmuring, and the restless head was restless no longer; and as dawn broke pallidly in the far east and night darkness was scattered, more quiet rest came to the little sufferer, and there might be hope, the nurse said softly; but who could tell positively until the hours were gone?

But to Anne at her window, as the outer

light deepened and the lamp light waned, it seemed that there was no more hope in all the world and no one to be relied upon save God!

And the next morning Dr. Benton rang Mrs. Dean's bell.

"He is asleep," Mrs. Dean told him, softly walking with him along the hall to the sick-room. "He has been quietly sleeping for some time, doctor—very quietly. Miss Eastman thinks that there may be hope. The fever does not go down, but there may be hope."

Dr. Benton bowed gravely. He listened with perfect courtesy to her explanation, but gave no opinion in return.

"I made my call earlier than yesterday's," he said, his hand upon the door-knob, turning to speak to her, "because the critical time will soon have passed, Mrs. Dean. We must be patient and hope."

As he entered the sick-room Mrs. Dean turned to the adjoining room, where Nellie awaited her. She and Nellie had been there all through the night and morning, waiting for what would come, fearing for Anne. Nellie was lying on the couch; the straight-backed, uncomfortable chair had disappeared; a bamboo

chair with soft cushions was beside the couch. Mrs. Dean seated herself in that.

"What did he say, mamma?" asked Nellie eagerly. Her color had grown much fainter during the last days of watching, and fear for Anne, but her bright eyes were too full of life to easily lose their lustre.

"He told us to hope," replied Mrs. Dean gently. "That is all that we can do now until the crisis is past. He will remain until then. He is wonderfully kind to our little orphan, Nellie!"

Nellie nestled her pretty head more comfortably among the sofa pillows, her eyes hidden from her mother's sight.

"He ought to be," she said sturdily. "He would be horrid if he were not, mamma!"

"Yes," said Mrs. Dean thoughtfully, "but we all do not so faithfully do as we ought, my dear. Dr. Benton is a good man."

"Then we ought to be ashamed of ourselves!" retorted Miss Nellie with supreme conviction, ignoring the latter part of her mother's speech. "I don't want to be horrid, mamma Dean!"

Mrs. Dean made no reply and no further remark, too anxious for the welfare of the sick

boy in the next room, whose life hung as in a balance almost even, waiting for the hours to lift or let fall. And the strange, strained, solemn silence once more fell upon the house in the presence of the Eternal Ocean drifting so near. How would it end? For life, for death? Now the one, now the other, no one knowing which should prevail.

The young physician, sitting beside the bed, his fingers lightly touching the tell-tale pulse in the thin wrist lying upon the counterpane, his face concentrated in intense watching for the faintest change, uttering no word to the quiet nurse standing upon the other side slowly moving a fan to and fro to cool the patient's flushed face, hoping and fearing alternately as a flicker of consciousness crossed the boy's face or a sigh stirred the parched lips.

He knew no more than they of the certain ending to this scene, that might also mean life or death to the man whose hand fell so heavily upon the helpless lad; but that thin, hot, wiry pulse continued to let the blood course past under the firm, light fingers, and tell its tale so plainly read by the careful watcher—for life—for death—the balance scarcely swaying for the one or the other.

"Bring me a bowl of water and a sponge, please," he said presently to the nurse, yet not removing his eyes from the face upon the pillows. "His lips are very parched."

The nurse quietly obeyed. She had stood beside death-beds before; this thoughtful moistening of the lips was one of those last acts possible to the living. Was the end approaching?

But she asked no questions; she would be told all that was necessary for her to know at present; the end she would know for herself. So she moved the fan slowly and evenly, watching the physician tenderly touching the dry, parted lips with the soft, cool, moistened sponge, wondering how it came about that he should be so infinitely gentle, yet asking no questions—waiting to know.

Thirty minutes went by, counted off by the rapid pulse-beats and the ticking of the watch lying open on the stand beside him. Thirty minutes, and just an almost imperceptible change in the flushed face that the physician's keen eyes caught. The faintest variation of color, the merest tinge in the lips, the scarcely-seen lifting of the eyelids. That was all, save the same faint change in the blood pulsing under the doctor's fingers; and the nurse saw

nothing that was different from what had been thirty minutes before, for even the physician's face was changeless for the time.

Forty minutes; fifty. Very close now upon the time that must turn the balance, that might turn it by a hair's weight. Very close.

Mrs. Dean, in the adjoining room, tried to be patient, tried to look as though it were well; told herself that the Lord gave and the Lord takes away, and that His name is still blessed; but do as she would, her eyes would turn toward the clock upon the mantel, watching the minute-hand clicking around—half after; quarter of; ten minutes—five! She could not rest.

While Miss Nellie, unable to find any comfortable or restful position for her head among the cushions, at last arose and softly paced the floor, or paused to part the window-curtains to see if Jim were coming—for Jim would be at home at noon to learn the tidings—or pause beside her mother's chair as though for comfort. Finally, as the minutes drew nearer the fatal hour, she crossed the room swiftly and covered the face of the clock with both her hands, whispering excitedly:

"Oh, time! stand still now, if, going, you bring evil to Anne!"

But the time for such visible miracles is past. Though the clock's face was covered by her foolish, loving hands, time went on just the same —second by second—ticking, ticking, ticking!

"My dear," said Mrs. Dean very softly, her eyes upon her daughter, her own heart moved as the time lessened for doubt. "If evil should come to Anne, be certain the Lord will give her the strength to bear it. Her nature is refined already through great sorrow."

"But it is cruel—cruel," cried Nellie swiftly but softly, "that Anne must suffer for the sin of another! She has done no harm!"

"We all suffer through our affections," said Mrs. Dean gently, and still Nellie covered the face of the clock, "according to the strength of our affections, my dear."

"And I suffer for Anne!" cried Nellie passionately. "If Dick should die——"

"The Lord gives and the Lord takes away and still His name is blessed."

The door opened very softly and the nurse entered; there was perfect peace upon her face, but Nellie, with youth's ardent hopes, read what it foretold.

"The crisis is past; he will recover," she said.

CHAPTER XVII.

CHANGES.

"The sad vicissitude of things."—*Laurence Sterne.*

When Jim Dean reached home at noon he found that there was some new stir about the house, slight, but perceptible. The door-bell was still muffled; footsteps were light about the rooms; voices low and undertoned; still instinctively he knew that the crisis was past, whether well or ill, as he mounted the steps, taking out his latch-key the sooner to enter and learn the truth. There was a subtle suggestion of life about the place that made him hopeful that death had not come. He knew of the consequences to Barclay should death be the outcome of that cruel blow; he had known it all along, but could not bring himself to speak of it any more than could Nellie. The plea of drunkenness could not save the man; it was scarcely probable that anything could save him from answering the charge.

Upon Anne's account they had made no charge

and there had been no arrest, for they knew how cruel would be her humiliation, and young Dean was assured that he could find the man at any time, if it were necessary. He pledged himself to that, and even Dr. Benton acceding—all of them because of Anne, not from sympathy for the man—what could be argued against it?

Anne had been in Jim Dean's thoughts continually that morning, crowding out even his thought of Dick save as his life or death affected her happiness. She had been in his thoughts a good deal lately, but this was different. This was one strong, supreme wish for her good and that it might be in his power to shield her from further cruelty and sorrow. Up to that time it had been a vague thought, a half formed hope; that morning it woke to powerful, full life; and in spite of the difference in their lives, the fine thread of social distinction that placed her, perhaps, a grade lower than he, he knew that Anne Barclay held his happiness in her gentle hold, so far as one human being should be allowed to make or mar another life.

His hand slightly trembled as he fitted the key in the lock and opened the door. No matter what should be the end of Dick's illness, no matter what should come to Barclay because of

his drunken cruelty, his daughter should be respected and honored—and loved—by him! He hoped that only good would come to all, but he knew the boy's critical condition and dared scarcely think of what might have come during his absence that morning, as he entered the house.

Nellie had been watching for him from the parlor window. She came down at once after the good news was made known, to repeat it to him as soon as he should enter, knowing that his anxiety equalled her own for Anne. For a moment, to be sure, after the overstrained, nervous waiting to learn the truth, and the truth was told, Miss Nellie came very near a fit of hysteria. Her bright eyes sparkled and her cheeks glowed with the first rush of delight that Dick would live and Anne have no heavier burden to bear. Her lips parted, but she could not speak; she clasped her hands and endeavored to regain her composure, but she had been under such a mental strain as never before had she been called upon to endure, and with her natural impulsiveness she could not be quiet and still her mad heart as her mother did.

With an eloquent gesture she turned once more to the clock upon the mantel, and reach-

ing up, standing on tiptoe to increase her height, she laid both hands tenderly upon it and pressed her lips excitedly upon the immovable, cold face!

"You have saved Anne—you have saved Anne!" she whispered foolishly. "You blessed, blessed clock! I shall love you always after this!"

"Nellie," said her mother, gently remonstrating, "do you forget to whom your thanks are due? Did the clock save the little fellow's life?"

Nellie's smile was dazzling as she turned to her mother.

"I couldn't forget," she said sweetly. "God has been too good to us, mamma; but the clock was so like one of us, waiting to know what would come with the hour, and it looked as though it were glad, too, that I couldn't help telling it that I was glad. We needn't fear for Anne now; she is safe! I shall go down and wait for Jim and tell him. He is as anxious as we."

She stooped, in passing her mother's chair, to touch her cheek with her lips, whispering again how good it was; and Mrs. Dean detained her for a moment as she would have passed.

"My dear," she said gravely, "you must not also forget that, under God, we owe Dick's recovery to Dr. Benton. He has been very faithful, utterly self-forgetful in his endeavor to save him. You must thank him, Nellie, before he goes away. I feared that you might not remember this in your excitement."

Nellie nodded brightly, withdrawing her hand from her mother's detaining hold.

"Of course, I'll not forget," she said. "Do you think that I could, when it means so much to Anne?"

But Mrs. Dean made no reply save a smile for this impulsive daughter; neither of them thinking how strange it was that Anne had so come into their lives.

And so, as Jim closed the outer door, entering the hall, Miss Nellie appeared in the doorway leading to the parlor; her face told the story before her lips could utter a word.

"I am so very, very glad!" said Nellie softly.

"And I," said her brother, his arm across her shoulder, as they entered the parlor together.

"For Anne!" added Miss Nellie softer still.

"For Anne, of course!" assented her brother, qualifying his words to her knowledge of his

heart. "Dr. Benton is a wonderful fellow, Nell!"

"Yes," said Miss Nellie, her assent also somewhat measured, remembering that she must thank the physician before he left the house, as her mother desired. But it was not such an easy thing to do, after all. She knew that the color was exceedingly warm in her cheeks and that her lips were rebellious in spite of her firm resolution to be perfectly at ease; she knew that her hand was not quite steady as she held it out to him as he crossed from the stairs to the door. But it never entered her head what a charming picture she made, coming to him from the parlor in this hesitating manner to render him her thanks!

"If it were not for you," she said softly, lifting for an instant the long lashes from her downcast eyes, feeling somewhat reassured by the firm clasp of the slim, strong fingers holding hers. "If it were not for you, Dr. Benton, we should not have such lightened hearts, knowing that the dear lad will recover! I wish that I could say that I had saved a life."

He smiled upon her. "You must not render thanks to me," he said gently; "I have done only what any physician should have done; but

even with our knowledge, life and death do not lie with us!"

She understood. She had no fear of him now. And looking up to him again, she smiled very brightly, but with pretty confidence.

And all this time Anne had her share of sorrow and humiliation, of which they did not know. All night, as they watched by Dick, she watched by her father with her hands and thoughts continually busy, though many times fatigue would overtake her and snatch her apart from care and watching with an instant's sleep. She never more than lost herself before she was again awake, guiding the needle through her sewing under the faint, low light of the lamp. The sound of her father's heavy slumber kept constantly before her the thought of him and his sad life, and her shattered hope for his improvement, and for them some day a happy home like others, humbler than Miss Nellie's perhaps, but happy.

Now and then her father would move or mutter some indistinguishable words, and she would rise and go to him to be assured that there was nothing she could do to make him more comfortable or less degraded. If she could have carried him to his bed, she would

have done so, but she could not; to see him lying there, almost at her feet, upon the floor, in that state of beastly intoxication, was more and more bitter to her as the night advanced. Her hope of better things was gone; also her wish to sometime prove that poverty is no crime, and that even men so low as her father could, with encouragement and determination, rise above themselves and be worthy of respect and love. But as dawn broadened into day and the streets began to fill with life, her father awoke, sat up and stared about him, at first uncomprehending; and, seeing her, muttered an imprecation upon her and gathered himself upon his feet. She laid aside her sewing and would have gone to him, but he waved her aside, and catching down his hat from its nail, passed unsteadily out the door and did not again appear until late that night.

He was sullen and ill-tempered when he went out so abruptly, leaving his daughter gazing for some time at the door that had shut behind him, her hands idle among her sewing, as though she would, if she could, keep him there with her in their home where no harm could come to him.

Things were bad enough, she thought sadly, listening to the sound of his unsteady steps

upon the stairs; truly bad enough; was he going out to make them still worse? He had done it so many times that she was growing to expect that nothing else could come to him or her so long as liquor held him bound, body and soul!

Then she thought of Dick, wondering if he were as well as they had told her, and as he assured her himself that he was; deciding to go to see him as soon as she could; not that day, for fear her father might need her at home, but very soon.

She thought of Nellie Dean and her mother and brother. What would they say could they have looked into that room last night? Would they despise her—and him—as she was almost despising herself in the added humiliation of hopes fallen dead?

Then her eyes grew tender again and color flushed her cheeks, remembering that he was her father and she must not judge him. She thought of Mrs. Millard in her handsome, lonely house, waiting for her daughter's return; Mrs. Millard, having sown the bitter seed, to reap what harvest? Such as this? Was it a vision of Nellie Dean's eyes, or only the effect of color from a stained glass in a high church window,

resting on the bride's pretty head as she knelt at the altar?

But sitting idly brooding was not Anne Barclay's way. She checked these unquiet thoughts and rose, laying aside her sewing, to open the windows for purifying the room, and made all things tidy ere she took up the day's work. She drank a cup of coffee, feeling weak and faint from long fasting and lack of sleep, and continued work, but the thought of food sickened her. All these things were carefully attended to; for literally in Anne Barclay's eyes, next to godliness came cleanliness, nature's pure air and light.

These kept up bodily strength, and bodily strength increased mental strength to resist temptations. Anne was no believer in preaching without practice, or suggestions without visible helps to attainment. When all was done, the atmosphere of the room, also swept clean of all impure odors by the cold outer air, Anne reseated herself at her sewing. She had changed her dress for another of neat calico, that fitted her perfectly, and her freshly coiled hair and the glow of cold-water bathing upon her face made her an attractive picture of neatness, sitting at her window, sewing.

She did not know, or imagine, that young Dean saw her there! If he mingled at all with her thoughts, it was certainly not as being near her in person. But he was there, across at the street corner, where he had long waited for her father to come out, determined not to give up this one plan for his reformation, though it took him weeks to succeed. He saw nothing of Barclay the previous day; surely he would not remain at home, or away—whichever he was doing—for two consecutive days. He left home early that morning, wishing to prevent missing the man, and stood very patiently at the corner now, out of sight of the windows, now where he could see Anne as she approached them. Surely, Barclay would come presently!

But Barclay did not come presently. Barclay feared, through all his dulled faculties, that this young fellow would be watching for him, and he was in no condition or humor to meet him then. Not that he would wish him to think that he gave in so easily, but he wanted, first, to be certain that he would not give in!

He had fought a desperate fight; he had struggled, now for and now against, the good angel wrestling with him. Never, since first he yielded to this reckless, careless life had he been

so beset. His conscience had grown daily and yearly less powerful to influence him, and even the sight of his pale, frail daughter, working tirelessly for him, did not at all affect him. It was her duty and privilege to work for him; so his boon companions told him; so he had come to believe.

But Jim Dean, the former bartender, the man of all men less likely to impress him with a knowledge of his wasted life; Jim Dean, of all men, had roused his conscience through fear, and impressed him through the fact of the power he possessed. Jim Dean had threatened him, and he feared Jim Dean!

Consequently, remembering the condition in which he returned home the previous night, maddened and driven reckless and determined to drown thought for the time, he feared that Jim Dean, as he had done before, would watch for and detect him and his wild debauch. Whether he should continue this difficult fight and conquer and be—or attempt to be—once more a man, or whether again he should be driven, regardless of consequences and drunkenly daring, he did not know as he left his house. All that he knew, was that he could not meet his daughter's quiet, grieved face and watch her tireless

working; all that he desired was to get away from her, to get one glass, at least, of the liquor that must cool the fiery effects of previous glasses, and let the day pass as it would; all that he cared for in getting away from his daughter, was also to keep from the sight of Dean.

He was still dazed from the effects of his heavy drinking, and was incapable of clear thought; these desires, uppermost in his mind, were more like the instincts of an animal. Should he wait on the stairs until it was probable that the young man would be tired of his watching and go away? Would not the other tenants of the house have to pass him and, aware that he had been drinking, and perhaps having noticed the watching man somewhere near upon the street, might they not consider that he had been guilty of some misdemeanor, and tell of his hiding there?

Drunkenness alone was not looked upon with such disfavor there, for nearly every man in the house or neighborhood—and some of the women and children, too—followed the same course; but anything that might lead to a sensation or momentary excitement, was quite another thing. He would not wait in the house at all; he would go out of the back door and

so get into the alley at the rear and come out upon the street below, and directly beside a saloon. No fear of meeting Jim Dean that way.

In case he should decide to follow Dean's advice rather than accept the consequences, he still preferred to keep apart from him until he had tried his hand at the struggle. Even if he was a coward and had fallen so low, there was the touch of manhood in his veins that forced him to do this.

He shrugged his shoulders, slouching with a half-drunken leer down the stairs and out through the back hall; and although Jim Dean waited beyond the hour of his last vigil, he was disappointed and forced to go down town without learning the truth.

Nellie Dean was to call upon Anne that afternoon, should Dick's condition improve, going down town on some errand and stopping in as though merely doing it because she was passing, and was to assure Anne that Dick was doing well—if so, she might conscientiously—in order to prevent Anne going to the house until the lad was better. This, if the crisis were safely passed; if not—— But none of them could endure to think of that and would make no plans for it.

And all day long John Barclay struggled with his unseen adversary, going out of the saloon after that one glass to cool the fever borne in his blood from yesterday's excess, and walking restlessly about the streets in spite of the cold, driven by the force of long silent conscience, to fight. And still to no purpose, no purpose at all, until the day was almost spent and he had turned in his way home. Passing the familiar saloon near his house, he met one of his companions, who paused to urge him to go in for just one friendly glass; but refusing, this man questioned, with a rough, half scornful laugh:

"So, it have turned you, Barclay? Well! well! I never thought you were a white-livered fellow before! Some folks are born fools, and some folks makes themselves such; still, it do seem as though it'd 'a' been pretty black for you if he'd 'a' died, sartin! I wouldn't special care 'bout havin' my neck so near that onpleasant sensation o' bein' choked!"

Barclay paused, facing him, stunned. He was too much astonished to comprehend, but there was no mistaking that there was some black charge against him, for the man's face told that story clearly enough, in spite of its disfigurement from long evil. Then he laid one hand

heavily upon the man's shoulder and demanded sharply what he meant by such a speech, and why he did not make his meaning clearer?

But the other merely shrugged his shoulders, stepping lazily back from his reach, retorting with slow delight at his new bit of gossip, that it wasn't much, indeed; that it would have been more, undoubtedly, if Dick Chester had died from that blow he gave him not many nights ago!

And John Barclay's dull comprehension could not fail to grasp the truth as he stood staring speechlessly after his companion; he moved away.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE BRIDE'S RETURN.

"The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers."
—*Wordsworth.*

When Minnie Millard laid aside her maiden name and girlhood's freedom with the consent of her parents and the fond admiration of her friends, she expected that for her the future would be filled with happiness. She was not foolish enough or too blinded by her first happiness to believe that no pain or sorrow would come to her; but no pain or sorrow could be very difficult to endure, she thought, fondly, with Tom Cartwright to share it with her. For Minnie loved the man she married; there was little of the cool consideration upon her part when considering the matter, as there had been with him.

She had known little of pain or sorrow, to be sure, during her young life, for her parents, in their love and care, kept from her what they could of the harsh side of life. Pain and sor-

row she knew only as they were shown in Anne Barclay's life, and perhaps in the lives of beggars upon the streets. But she gave no thought to Anne Barclay during that happy time of her wedding; and what had she to do with beggars, good or bad?

She expected all good things to crown her life. She was sorry to leave the old home, but whenever one marries one must do that, she argued, and it was not as though she should never see it again. So she went away, quite happy, with her husband for only six short months, she said contentedly, not dreaming how long they might prove!

The mystical thread that was woven by the Lady of Shalott—was it not well that she could not know of the scattered end? For, happy and blithe and certain of good when she went from home upon her wedding day, some change had come upon the world for her. She and her husband traveled where they chose; made many friends; led a gay life in society—the gayest seeming of all—and everything that change and scenery and stirring social life could do to bring the fulfillment of her wish, was surely spread about them; but Minnie Cartwright was not happy.

She was brighter than before, and much prettier; could chat and sing and entertain her friends as though her heart were lightest of any. She did not betray the change through her manner; it was the fair, rather childlike, careless face, the hardening blue eyes that used to sparkle when her lover came, that grew cold now in his presence, that told the story of indifference or unhappiness.

Her husband was the same to all appearances; he was as coolly courteous to her when they were among their friends, as indolently thoughtful of her comfort when they were—by what they termed misfortune—alone together; he was handsome and cultivated, and she was to be envied, the ladies said—the gentlemen were more silent upon that; he was, in truth, just the same man as before they were married, but—she found it out too late! She had believed that he loved her as she loved him; she found that he loved her coolly, rather as though it were a matter of course that she should give him her full affection, and he, if so it pleased him, could be careless of her.

There was no quarrel; never any angry words; the truth was too deadly to the woman who had all her life been most tenderly cared for and

showered with affection for words to heal the rift! She had been blinded by what she had heard of his honorable character and faultless manners; that was all; she must bear the consequences.

And as the months went by Minnie grew to live apart from him, never to consult his wishes, never to be consulted. Each chose their circle of friends and were gay and brilliant and apparently happy. She was beautiful, brilliant, bright; no more the gentle, confiding girl whom Tom Cartwright had married. He was handsome, careless, extravagant; no change whatever in his manner.

Their life was brilliant but reckless, and most unsatisfactory to a tender conscience. But Minnie's conscience she hushed by repetitions of the deception that had come to her in the man she married. The truth, forced upon her little by little, also crushed her soft heart and it grew hard and indifferent to all eyes but those of her soul and her God! She was too proud, and he knew that she was too proud to betray the truth.

Everything that she could desire that did not interfere with his happiness, was granted her; he was lavish with gifts and jewels and flowers

until her friends murmured of his magnificent generosity and evident affection ; careless words in praise of her beauty when the mood was upon him ; but she had found that his nature was too cold, too calculating and selfish ever to respond to her wealth of love, and she shut it rebelliously down in her heart and locked it there with the key of pride, and was the gayest of the gay and much sought after and admired—and envied !

The six months that had seemed so short on that bright day of happiness when she laid aside her old life, seemed sometimes, during the weeks that passed, almost endless in their going. She longed for the old home faces and affection, the care and thought that had made her young life so happy. But she gave no sign of this.

She wrote long letters to her bridesmaids as she had promised, full of wit and chat and the endless nothings dear to a woman's heart ; she was also faithful in her remembrance of her home. She was loyal always to her husband in word and look. She was absurdly happy, she wrote her mother and friends ; absurdly happy ! And as they were so enjoying the life of travel it was impossible to tell whether or not they would return within the six months agreed upon.

But when seven months had gone and spring was beautiful upon the earth, then Minnie Cartwright wrote to her mother and friends that they had torn themselves away from the friends in the West and were on their way to those dearer friends in the East.

And to those nearest and dearest in the old home, this was the longest time of all—waiting for the bride's return!

But long or short, it went by as all time goes, and Mr. Millard's handsome house was aglow with welcome for the daughter and the son! They would arrive at night, and the tables were laid with everything that they remembered the bride liked; the rooms were heaped with flowers; the lawn was bright with colored lamps and lanterns. The bridesmaids were there in waiting, at Minnie's request; and it was very brilliant—the scene waiting the bride's return!

"But I could wish," said Harry Millard regretfully as they were making preparations for this welcome, "that our little Minnie had chosen to come first to us quietly! It is so long since she went away and the house has seemed so lonely without her! We could have given her the reception afterward."

But Mrs. Millard, although the same half re-

gretful, half fearful wish had been in her mind, shrugged her handsome shoulders and told him coldly and with a superior air of wisdom in such matters, that it was only natural for the happy bride to wish to be welcomed, returning, by those who had seen her go away.

Still, she was mentally asking herself over and over, like a dull refrain, whether this public home-coming were proof of happiness or not? But after all there was little time to ask or answer, for the time was slipping by and it must be seen to that everything was as it should be and the guests at ease; and this involved considerable time and tact, and the twilight had deepened to the darkness of a starlight, moonless night, the house and piazza and lawn fairly aglow with lights and colors; and conversation lagged and a slight stir of subdued excitement proved that the time was past!

And a few minutes later a handsome traveling carriage turned in under the arched gateway festooned with flowers and lamps, and drew up at the steps, and Minnie Cartwright, more beautiful, bright, and altogether more charming, was assisted to the ground by her handsome husband, and was once more in the midst of her home and friends, and was given not one mo-

ment to pause and compare the going away to the return of the bride!

Was this her wish?

And dawn made the lights dim upon the lawn before the last guests departed, leaving time for only the simplest words of tenderness between father and child as Mr. Millard for a moment held his daughter in his arms. Mrs. Millard merely touched her lips to Minnie's, saying calmly that the time had seemed very long. No other words of tenderness passed between her daughter and herself save these quiet words of salutation.

Millard was more demonstrative than his wife; perhaps that thin film of cloud about his business so constantly haunting him rendered him more open in all other dealings; he was certainly less haughty and less thoughtful of what others said or thought, than his wife. He was proud, but it was a pride softened by humility and rendered more charitable by an open-handed, generous charity.

There was no doubt in the minds of any one assembled there that night that the reception was a magnificent success, and that the bride was more beautiful than ever, and certainly more gracious. Perhaps travel had improved

her manner, and greater dependence upon herself away from home had given strength and a dignified tone to her character. In any case, the bride had returned, and as a wife was irreproachable.

Mr. Cartwright was given as warm welcome as his wife, and he thoroughly understood how to make himself a favorite with every one, because this homage and flattery pleased his vanity. Certainly, he and his wife were a most devoted, delightful couple. One could but envy each the good fortune of having won the other. So the guests said, gossipping.

But the dawn, replacing the light of lamps and lanterns, showed rather sadly and ghostly the drooping flowers and decorations upon arch and pillar. The house looked also sad and alone, shut up after the guests had departed and the lights put out. Then it was too late for more than a few words of loving welcome between the daughter and parents and the son-in-law. No more even then than simplest sincerity of gladness at having them at home again, and pleasure at returning; words that one might safely say at any time and still retain the mask upon the face. All of it small talk, with smiles and easy modulation of the voice, all

still wearing the reception toilettes, pausing in the wide hall at the foot of the staircase.

They breakfasted quietly in the library in order to get away from the wreck of the festivity, as Mr. Cartwright said, laughing. He was in excellent spirits, protesting that he should carry Mr. Millard off at once when the meal was ended, to have a look at the old home city; and Minnie was beautiful and brilliant in spite of travel and late hours.

"We must give you good luck and happiness, you and our daughter, Cartwright, in a glass all around," said Mr. Millard as they were rising from the table. "You had speeches last night and any number of healths and good wishes, but this is different—just among ourselves, and a trifle more sincere. Fill the glasses, Jackson."

Jackson obeyed, and the health was drunk with laughing words and smiles and the old sidelong, laughing glance from Minnie's eyes toward her father, and a nameless cloud seemed lifted from the rest of the group and fall unobserved upon the shoulders of Mr. Millard. What this cloud was he could not define himself, and he dared not examine his heart too closely to learn the truth. But when the ladies were

gone, Mr. Cartwright filled and emptied another glass of the wine.

"This is excellent stuff, Mr. Millard," he said easily, holding the glass before the light and critically examining the contents. "I'm rather fond of good things of all sorts, and the best of it is that I never go under. Lots of the fellows are upset by half what I drink, and yet I never lose my head. I know just how much is good for me and stop there; they're fools who don't."

He nodded and drank the wine lightly, setting the glass upon the table again; but this subtle, heavy weight descended with the glass upon Mr. Millard's heart, and from under his quiet brows he searched the gay face opposite as though he dared not believe and yet must know if this were safe for Minnie's happiness.

"I suppose you saw a good deal of gay life in the West—especially in San Francisco?" he ventured presently, quite calmly, but with that shadow still upon his face. "Minnie is much improved, I think, Tom."

"Yes," assented Tom easily, with his nonchalant air, choosing a cigar from his case as they rose from the table, after passing the case to Mr. Millard. "We saw a good bit of life, Mr.

Millard,—gay, careless, captivating life rather. Minnie was won to it at once and made quite a sensation; we were going continually; cordial people they are there, and warm-hearted. I had letters to the bank and to private parties and we had little rest. My wife is certainly improved and I am glad that you notice it. It doesn't take long for the world to teach us dignity and self-control, and a fine perception of the politeness required by all. Minnie was rather timid in her pretty manner when she left here, Mr. Millard, and it was a taking little way, but it doesn't create happiness in the world."

"I think that that was because we were so tender of her, Tom," said Mr. Millard gravely, no hint of lightening in the fallen cloud. "She is our only child and we gave her all our affection and all good things so far as we knew. She is very dear to us, Tom."

"Of course!" said Tom. For a moment he felt a trifle uncomfortable because of Mr. Millard's words and manner, but he was too intensely selfish to allow anything to put him out for long. "Minnie is a charming woman indeed; no one could fail to admire her, Mr. Millard."

"And love her!" murmured Mr. Millard under his breath.

But the young man had gone lazily from the room to smoke upon the piazza, and Mr. Millard sat alone at the table, his head resting on his hand, moodily thinking of what had been and still might be. As he sat so, alone, the door slowly opened and Minnie entered, dressed for the street. She started slightly when she saw him, but with the old impulsive affection she crossed to his side and laid one soft round arm across his shoulders, stooping to look into his eyes.

"Dreaming, father?"

He started also and glanced up at her, drawing the white hand down from his shoulder to clasp it in his, the shadow growing deeper.

"No, not dreaming," he answered gravely though he smiled, remembering their old happy days in that room; "only thinking, Minnie."

"Pleasant thoughts?" she queried lightly, withdrawing her hand and standing beside him quite calmly. "I never think any more now, father—I have no time," she added hastily, seeing the swift, keen change in his eyes. "It isn't fashionable to think nowadays, and better be out of the world, you remember, than out of the fashion!"

She scarcely knew herself what she was say-

ing; she only knew that she must not allow him to question her too closely with that tenderness upon his face, for her own peace sake.

Her father arose as she turned to take a glass from the table and drew the decanter of wine near her, pausing with one hand upon it as her father laid his hand upon her arm very gravely and tenderly. The grieved expression in his eyes was more than she could meet.

"You are happy, Minnie? An absurd question to ask our pretty bride, but we who love you well may go beyond the pale of pride if so we may add to happiness. Are you happy, little one?"

For an instant an indescribable change struck the pretty face above the wine-glass; then she laughed easily, lifting her bright eyes to his.

"You dear old worrying papa!" she said with her old, pretty extravagance of expression. "Do you think that I did not know my heart when I had to settle that dreadful question of Tom's? You foolish papa! Of course I am happy—the happiest woman in the city, if that will please you!"

Very arch and bright she looked, pausing to convince him ere she poured the wine; but he

sighed, watching her, startled at the frequent use she had made of the wine that morning.

"Another glass, Minnie?" he queried jestingly, not to wound her by implied displeasure. "What an inveterate little toper you are getting to be!"

She laughed, nodding merrily.

"Yes; I learned that in the West, papa. It is very refreshing when one is fatigued. Tom recommended it for me and I find it answers nicely. As I shall have to be very, very busy this morning I take a preventative, you see!"

She lifted the filled glass to her lips and drank the contents as though wine were indeed no new thing to her. Then she laughed again, catching the shadow upon his face.

"I believe you don't like me to take it," she said, her eyes sparkling with the effects of the wine. "Why, you are a foolish papa, I declare! As though you need ever be afraid for your daughter! I am sure mamma used always to give it to me when I was tired or hurried, and Tom says that there is no danger so long as one knows how much is good for one and never goes beyond that! Well!" She paused in the doorway, brilliant with life and color, aglow with the effects of the wine. "Good-bye, papa.

I really must go. Mamma is waiting at this moment!"

She laughed, and threw a kiss to him from the tips of her pretty, gloved fingers; and he was once more alone. But the shadow had deepened.

"My God!" he whispered with a gesture of despair, turning from the sight of the glass still holding the dregs of the wine she drank. "If I have unwittingly committed wrong, will the fruit of it fall upon her?"

CHAPTER XIX.

OTHER SEED-GROWTH.

With tenderest care and hope and thought,
Seed sown, can never come to naught.

—*Author.*

To all appearances Minnie Cartwright was perfectly careless and certain of no harm, as she laughingly replied to the fear in her father's face. Undoubtedly, she had seen a good deal of the sorrow that rises from the use and abuse of wine and other spirituous liquors since her new life began, and ever since she was old enough to hold independent thought, she had felt that there must be sorrow in the selling of liquor, even with her father's strict conscientiousness regarding it.

Then, too, standing in the doorway that morning, laughing down her father's fears, there rose vividly in her mind the sweet, pale face of Anne Barclay, lifted above her endless sewing! She had almost forgotten Anne; her life had been so crowded with events, so utterly new for

the past few months, that there had been no room for Barclay's quiet daughter with her Madonna face. But now the old memory wakened and faced her—faced her with a strange sense of guilt, remembering her recent reckless use of the liquor that had darkened the life of this other girl—that she knew had darkened her life and the life of how many others?

The warm, dull red of shame replaced the fresh, beautiful color that had tinged her face as this memory grew, and she saw distinctly what it was that her father feared; then this new, cold pride returned to her and she bit her lip, shrugging her graceful shoulders as she turned from the room. Was she, Millard's daughter, to place herself upon a footing with Anne Barclay? Was it possible that even the thought had suggested itself to her of judging herself along with Barclay, a confirmed drunkard?

She had never been guilty of intoxication; she had been specially brilliant and witty, perhaps, from the use of wine; a little irresponsible, too, at times when the wine was hot in her blood; but there was absolutely nothing to be alarmed at. Her mother had always recommended it; her husband did the same; her father countenanced the selling of it to a certain

very fine extent, and yet it was only he who was so sensitive. Her own sensitiveness had been dulled—she realized that with a bitter laugh—during these months of absence from home. Perhaps this was as well for her and for every one having to fight with life.

So she went away quite gaily with her mother, assisted to the carriage and passing light words of chit-chat with her husband, who returned to his seat upon the piazza and the pleasure of his cigar as soon as they were gone. But Anne Barclay's voice and face and manner would not be so easily set aside in her roused memory; she was haunted by them all that day and many times afterward.

"I would give much if I could forget her!" murmured Minnie Cartwright fretfully to herself that night. "Perhaps, if I go to see her once more, the old memory will fade. I cannot endure to be followed by the thought of her as though I had done her some harm!"

It was only in this way that she could compose herself to sleep; but she slept after coming to this conclusion, no wine having passed her lips since the scene in the library. But it was several days before she could get time to go to Anne, with the many duties devolving upon her

through choosing, and furnishing, and arranging their new house. They remained at her home instead of at the hotel, where they stopped upon the day of their arrival, but she was careful that there should be no opportunity for close questioning regarding her happiness; that first conversation with her father warned her that they feared some shadow upon her life, and she was exceptionally gay to dispel such thought until even they, with their eyes made keen by love, were forced to believe that the pretty, young wife was perfectly happy.

But as the passing months brought change to Minnie Cartwright, so change came to Anne and her friends. All the day after her father's exceptional excess in drinking, Anne was depressed and very quiet. She made up her mind to endure, as patiently as ever, what should come; but this determination seemed to bring with it a new, deep sadness of manner, and a strange, far-away look in the calm eyes. She should go to see Dick to-morrow, she said to herself; she would remain at home that day; how could she know of the need there might be for her presence there? Her father was quarrelsome sometimes after hard drinking, and she would protect his self-respect with those in the

house, if she could. She must not go away, not even for Dick !

Nellie Dean came to see her in the early afternoon, as had been agreed upon, and her bright presence and happy chatter upon countless small subjects, dear only to women's hearts, lightened the room and the heart of the listener and cheered Anne as no one else could have done.

Dick was getting on nicely, Nellie assured her, glad from the depths of her heart that she could so truthfully speak ; Dick was such a quaint, dear little fellow, no wonder he won Anne's affection ; he had won their hearts already. Her mother was well and sent her love ; Jim, too, was doing finely in his new position, and had improved so much ; she was dreadfully proud of him ; didn't Anne think that she ought to be proud of him ?

And, of course, Anne said that she thought that Mr. Dean was very kind and good, a hint of warm bright color in her face ; adding that Dr. Benton, too, was one of the best and most disinterested of people. To which Miss Nellie murmured her assent, her bright eyes scrutinizing Anne from under their long lashes ; and by and by she left Anne, who was at liberty to

again take up the dull thread of her sadder thoughts; but she did not resume it; this girl's bright call had given them a new current. Dick's fond, foolish words as to the possibility of there being intentional meaning in Mr. Dean's gift of flowers, came back to her, and brought the color, soft and pink, in her cheeks.

They were foolish words, she said, and she was foolish to even recall them; but there was a subtle sweetness in thinking that some one other than Dick thought of her with warmer regard than a passing acquaintance, and she was not successful in banishing the thought—even in the wish to banish it.

"I believe that I am growing foolish," she said to herself quite sternly, "not having Dick or his mother to care for, or even Miss Millard to run in now and then to argue with me. I must be more careful how I allow my thoughts to run wild!"

But that evening, pausing at the window to look out in the street to search if there were any sign of her father ere she drew down the shade after lighting the lamp, she saw Jim Dean at the corner, just crossing the street, who, looking toward her window, saw her there, and lifted his hat, a smile upon his face. It was

out of his way to pass that street; the color rose to her cheeks; her hand trembled, resting lightly on the ledge, but not from the cold, though it was very cold. Did he pass that way for her? Then she resolutely banished the thought as still further foolishness; closed the window and resumed her seat and sewing till her father should come, the dread of what his condition might be, driving out all other thought.

And when she heard his step on the stairs, she held her breath to listen, fearful of what it should foretell; but it was slow and steady, and as he entered the room her heart once more lifted with hope. He was perfectly sober and there was some new expression upon his face that she could not understand.

"Anne!" he said slowly, but not roughly, after a brief silence, during which she deftly set the food upon the table, "I s'pose you've been to the Deans lately, haven't you?"

"I was there three days ago," she answered gently, hoping so to soften any anger he might feel because of her visit there.

"And you haven't been there since?" he again asked with clumsy intentness, to catch her in deception, although never had she deceived him.

"No, father; come," she said softly, "dinner is ready now."

He was watching her keenly, from under his heavy brows. He did not at once reply or notice her remark regarding the waiting dinner. There was a dull, dazed look upon his face that startled Anne when it impressed itself upon her.

"Are you ill, father?" she questioned half timidly, going around to him and laying her hand upon his shoulder.

He shook it off and frowned, but did not—as was habitual with him—mutter an oath against her.

"And you haven't seen anything of 'em since then, Anne—none of 'em?" he added, after a moment, roughly enough, but as though much depended upon her answer.

She noticed this and could not comprehend it.

"Miss Dean was here this afternoon, father," she replied, hesitating.

"Oh!" he said. "Yes! And how did she say she left master Dick? Did she tell you that he nearly died owing to my harshness with him when he was here t'other night? Or that your father would 'a' had to answer for that, had he died?"

He rose and faced her, questioning her in this

rough bitterness, his hands clenched upon the back of his chair, his eyes meeting hers desperately as though to learn her thought of him ere she could speak.

She did not shrink from him though her face was deadly white and her eyes widened, looking into those desperate, daring, imploring eyes of his. Some dim wonder was in his heart as to whether or not she could now love and care for him, and she read it there.

Laying her hand upon his arm she lifted her face more steadily to his and forced a smile upon her stiff lips.

"Miss Dean said that Dick was doing well," she said steadily; "she told me nothing of this —I knew nothing of it; but in any case they shall do no harm to my father!"

He faced her, motionless, for a moment, marveling at this girl's radiated face; then, sinking in his chair and throwing out his arms upon the table he buried his face upon them, and wept as it was terrible to her to hear. But looking so into her face he saw the tender face of her mother, and all the long-gone, wasted years came back upon him, forced back by his desperate struggle of the past two days, and weakened by the unusual mental strain under

which he had been; he drew her to him and kissed her, and she felt that whatever she had endured was royally repaid!

So the days and months went by with Anne and Dick and the others as they also passed with Minnie Cartwright, though they brought about vastly different ends; and at the earliest opportunity after her new home was arranged to her fastidious taste and entire satisfaction, regardless of cost, young Mrs. Cartwright went to call upon Anne.

She told no one where she was going, for she felt that she could not do that; it should be a visit that should quiet her conscience and rested with no other. She went very quietly without carriage or footman; she was handsomely but plainly dressed and took a street-car and reached in a most ordinary fashion the street where Anne lived.

She was remembering rather uneasily the fact that she had not even suggested to Anne that she should be glad for her to be at the church upon her wedding day; not that this was at all required of her, but Anne was very different from many in her station of life, Mrs. Cartwright said to herself, and it would have shown a friendly feeling to have given her at least that

careless invitation. She acknowledged to herself that Anne had not been at all in her thoughts at that time, and why she should now so strongly and persistently return, she did not know. It was very absurd for her to liken herself to Barclay merely because she found that the use of wine was beneficial to her; but she must go and see for herself again just how much misery and sorrow could come from its excess.

"As though you are a drunkard or ever likely to be!" she said to herself in disgust. "I'm ashamed of you, Minnie Cartwright! Pray, what would your friends say if they knew—or your mother and father?"

She paused in this resentful speech, remembering what her father had said that first morning in the library. She read his fear in his face and it angered her as well as it wakened the question in her heart if she were strong enough in mental power to know always how much was good for her and where the fine line lay beyond which was the other horrible road?

She was revolving these things in her mind as she walked from the car to Anne's home, and was not prepared to be informed, as the landlady informed her, that Anne was away at

the Deans and would not return until late that night—probably ten or thereabouts.

"But her father?" she queried curiously, wondering if he could be dead.

"Oh, her father was to go too after work," the woman replied, and Minnie suddenly decided that something remarkable had taken place there and she should go at once to Anne wherever she was and discover.

It was a cosy little home, she acknowledged, this in which Jim Dean lived; no show about it, nothing for mere style, but a home as proved by its surroundings. A feeling of resentment took possession of her in her unreasonable state of dissatisfaction with herself as she realized without one word of explanation that if any change had come to Anne it was to add to her happiness; not, as in her own case, to learn that the world was hollow and false and to be met only with a masked face.

Her belief that good had come to Anne was strengthened as Anne rose to meet her after having been announced by the servant. Anne, and yet not altogether the old Anne! The Anne she left seven months before was pale and very quiet; the slender woman who rose to meet her now was quiet too, but it was a grace-

ful calm as though whatever had come to her had taught her sweetness and peace; and the old pallid face was softly oval and free from care and delicately colored with the glow of health. Her gray eyes were shining with pleasure, mingled with an almost shadowless, momentary intensity of penetration in searching her visitor's beautiful face.

Nellie was in the room with Anne; the old Nellie a trifle more womanly; and Mrs. Dean sat at one of the windows sewing upon some fancy-work.

"It is so long since I have seen you, Anne," said Mrs. Cartwright easily, "that I felt obliged to hunt you up. I hope that I have not disturbed you! How well you are looking, and how is Dick?"

Anne smiled, the old smile only touched by this same new happiness that was delightful to see; and by and by her friends left them alone, understanding that they might wish to talk of the old times without the presence of strangers. And then the story of the change in Anne's life was made known to Mrs. Cartwright.

She listened to it with the deepest interest, for it was delightful to listen to Anne's soft voice and watch the flicker of light and shade

upon her face as the light and shade of her life was expressed in words. Her father was at work; he held a position which was obtained for him by Mr. Dean; he was sober and doing well, faithfully fighting the demon that was hidden in the liquor for him! Anne was proud of him; one could see that in the fine, gentle, happy face. His friends were proud of him too, she told this other friend. And he and Dick—he and Dick had not at one time gotten on well together—were the best of friends. Dick would do more for her father any day than for any one save herself. And they were living comfortably in the same little rooms, but with many comforts about them; and as for her, her friends and her father would hear nothing of her working any longer save about her own home.

What had brought the change about? Mrs. Cartwright asked her; but Anne could not tell; she did not know; she did not wish to know yet; it was happiness enough to know that it was come!

It was late when Mrs. Cartwright rose to go, so absorbed had she been in listening to this story of sorrow changed for joy; and as she rose, young Mr. Dean entered the hall, and not

knowing of their caller, and hearing Anne's voice in the parlor, he entered with her name upon his lips.

No need indeed to tell Mrs. Cartwright that those old flowers meant more than mere friendship! No need to utter one word of explanation, seeing this eloquent face turned upon Anne.

She smiled and held out her hand with new, sincere warmth in her manner.

"Mr. Dean!" she said. And then with her own color heightened she added sweetly,—"You haven't told me one word, either of you, but I know that I may congratulate you!"

And even in the midst of her blushes and shy words and the pretty pleasure of this old friend, Anne wondered how Minnie knew?

But presently Mrs. Cartwright declared that she must not linger another moment, no matter how pleasant it might be to her so to do, and asking if Dick were not to return—he was with young Dr. Benton on his round of calls—and learning that it was always uncertain when he would be in at such times, she went away carrying with her a picture of true, earnest, quiet happiness that she could never know though she should spend every hour of the day in the midst of her gay life striving to find it!

And as Jim Dean and his sister walked with Anne and her father to their home that evening—it was a delightful evening and so the walk did not seem to them long—it was remarkable that young Dr. Benton should come upon them near Anne's home without so much as a murmured excuse for being there, and so in his turn walked back with Jim and Miss Nellie as though it were not safe for this young woman to be out upon the streets with only her brother! But it was very pleasant also to him to feel her soft hand upon his arm even if she did shyly keep her face hidden from his eyes under the rim of her pretty hat. And it did not need a very shrewd mind to guess what would be the end of all this remarkable watchfulness!

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It was well for them all—best for Minnie Cartwright of them all—that they could not pierce the years and see the end of her young, promising life, when she lay with the flowers from loving hands strewn about her ready for her last resting-place! Or to know that from the night she left Anne Barclay in her new happiness and with the promise of a long and peaceful life before her, she entered once more

the reckless whirl of fashion and gave herself never any time for thought or questioning; gave herself never any rest; and was—sad to tell—so often under the influence of the liquor her mother had urged upon her to use as an antidote for fatigue, a deadly poison that lurked in the glass to wound and kill!

She left two children and they were placed under the care of the strictest and yet not harsh teacher that Mr. Millard could choose for them; their father cared little after the first days of mourning were over, although to the world he was the perfection of a bereaved man; and Mr. Millard, heart-broken, crushed, stung, too, by the venomous serpent that lies at the bottom of every wine-cup to rise when the time shall come,—Mr. Millard gave up his accursed business and lived in a seclusion that shut out all sunlight, for the remainder of his life. His home was desolate save for the proud woman who, as his wife, still upheld the family pride; but for himself he could not show his face among his brother men again, knowing that through his sin his daughter had sinned!

But there was brightness in these years for the others; happiness and hope and love. Dick, under the care of his friend, Dr. Benton, grew

strong and almost straight in figure as the years went by; and he was studious and eager to make of his life the best he could to prove his gratitude to the friends who had come about him when most he needed them. He was very decided in his desire to enter the medical profession as soon as he should be old enough, and in this, as in his other desires, this young doctor stood his friend.

And much happiness joined with occasional sorrow filled these years in their lives and proved the difference of the seed sown in the years gone by; and that other bitter seed that had destroyed a bright young life and crushed a soul. "As the seed"—is it not plainly written?—"as the seed, so shall the harvest be!"

For God moves in nature and nature moves in God, and always as the months and seasons pass, fruition comes, bad or good, according as seed was sown, and as this truth was proved by Anne Barclay's early struggle to overcome self and cultivate first and foremost the thought of others and a tender judgment of another's sin!

THE END.

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